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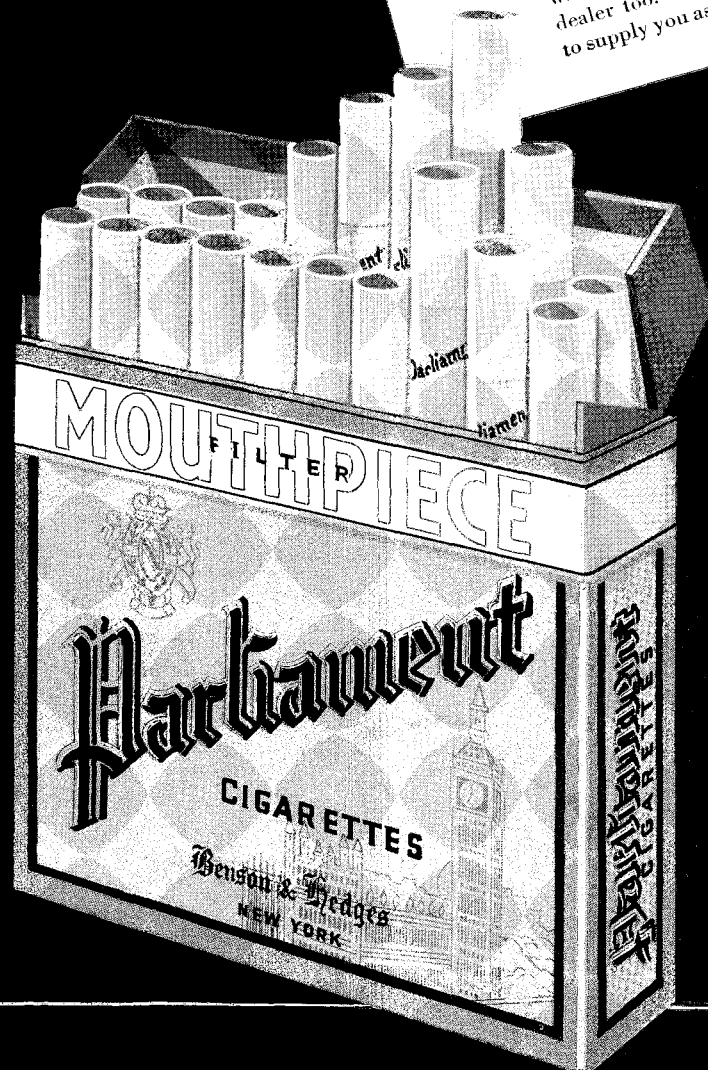
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HOW MUCH NEWS IN THE NEWS LETTER?

by DIXON WECTER

SOME years ago a mystery story told of a racing tout who bought an evening paper in the London fog from a hawker with a beard like Father Time's, and to his astonishment found that it bore tomorrow's dateline and a full list of tomorrow's winners. Next day the gambler went all-out, and had his reward in sterling. But on the train back from Ascot he opened the wonderful paper again, and his eye fell upon a stop-press item announcing his own death from heart attack in a railway carriage — just as he felt the stab of mortal pain. The moral is an old one: no man can look upon the face of the future and live.

Yet to learn the news before it happens has always been man's desire. This wish has sired a curious development in American journalism. It is the forecaster's bulletin, in print or mimeograph or hectograph, mailed confidentially to subscribers. To read the news "in advance," these clients pay amounts ranging from \$18 to \$36 a year. For more detailed advice, addressed to the subscriber's special problem, annual fees may run up to \$500 or more. The letter of Capitol Hill gossip and chatty gener-

alities costs less than searching reports of the "Government and Your Business" or "How to Thrive Under the New Deal" type.

To Adam Smith and Ricardo, crises and depressions — like the Mississippi Bubble and South Sea fiasco — were less interesting than conditions in "the normal state." The first real students of the heights and depths were critics hostile to the status quo, like Sismondi, who mused over the wreckage of the Napoleonic Wars, and Karl Marx, who hoped to prove that crises are the chronic spasms of capitalism on its deathbed. All sorts of theories emerged about the cause of business cycles — sun spots, mass emotions of hope or panic bound up with rising birth or death rates, innovations, overproduction or oversaving, and a dozen more — while the wiser modern economists, like Wesley C. Mitchell, came to see the cycle as a complex of many forces.

Early in this century, some economists ventured predictions on the theory of a smooth succession of business cycles, at intervals of three, or five, or seven years. Others claimed there was no such thing as an orderly cycle — notably Irving Fisher, who for a while derided the notion that business fluctuations were more significant than ups and downs of "the weather cycle" or "the Monte Carlo cycle." For a generation the forecasts of Professor Fisher and other bold academics made headline news.

To clients hopefully believing that not only economics, but daily business, was a science, with predictable results, certain services were first offered

An American historian who got his start in Texas, DIXON WECTER was born in Houston and educated at Baylor University, Yale, and Oxford. In his books, *The Saga of American Society*, *The Hero in America*, and his latest, *When Johnny Comes Marching Home*, a study of our veterans in earlier wars written during his tenure of a Guggenheim Fellowship, Mr. Wecter has proved himself an impartial and exacting judge of the American past and present. He is a Professor of the University of California at Los Angeles and a Research Associate of the Huntington Library.

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by men trained in journalism and statistics — like John Moody, James H. Brookmire, and Roger Babson. At the start they were mainly annalists of business, compiling manuals of industrial and corporation securities, plotting the past curve of the stock market, tracing the index of bank credit supply, and cautiously drawing conclusions about the symptoms of good times and lean. Brookmire's *Analyst*, begun in 1911, was typical of those days. Taking as its motto "Science can forecast not waves but tides," this leaflet tried to anticipate the future from the evidence of credit supply, stock prices, and general business activity.

Then came the Great War, and a post-Armistice world quivering with insecurity — filled with rumors of revolution, Red scares, a slump expected in 1919 (which agreeably failed to happen), and the bubble of a prosperity that suddenly burst in the autumn of 1920. Many citizens eager to lay hold on normalcy (once defined as nostalgia for things to be again as they never quite were) hoped a little foreknowledge might soothe that feeling of insecurity.

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TO MEET their need, a brighter, bolder sort of business prediction sprang up. The older services put forth "forecasters" with the crisp air of communiqués, and "barometer charts" that were less meteorological than clinical in their feverish tone.

Under the aegis of the oldest university in the United States, the Harvard Economic Society in June, 1919, began to issue Monthly and Weekly Letters. Its theory was simple, if dubious: rising stock prices and falling interest rates always herald an upturn; the reverse signs a depression. The Society's good luck in announcing the recession of 1920-21 and the recovery of 1922 built considerable prestige, which later crumbled, to the embarrassment of the University and its Overseers. Only in the Delphic sense could one describe as foresight the Society's words, for example, on November 16, 1929: "It is clear, however, that nothing like the depression of 1920-21 is now in prospect."

Meanwhile in January, 1921, Standard Statistics entered the forecasting field, and up to 1929 it achieved the highest score — 52 per cent — among business forecasters for accurate prediction, according to a study made by Professor Garfield V. Cox of the University of Chicago. Under the depression, however, its record also sagged.

Babson, developing his self-styled "law of action and reaction," achieved a score of 45 per cent accuracy in Cox's tally, showing better results in fore-

telling recessions than recoveries; while Brookmire, despite a major blunder in foretelling a depression for 1926 and having a general average of only 31 per cent accuracy, won some marked successes, including announcement of an impending "recession" in the midsummer of 1929. Distinctly poorer were the records made through the twenties by Moody's Investors Service and by the Monthly Letter of Charles E. Mitchell's National City Bank.

The age of confidence ran from the recovery of 1922 to the October crash of 1929. In the absence of a national lottery, citizens gravitated to a game of chance where, for a while, nobody seemed to lose — a game, moreover, that had a certain moral respectability denied to horse racing. Playing the stock market had also its "scientific" aspect, about which the forecasters presumably knew everything — while the average subscriber in his innocence regarded the pyramiding of profits as an Eleusinian mystery if not a black art.

Middle-aged men — traditionally the most prudent — who had come face to face with the limitations of their earning power, in terms of professional advancement or dollar-to-dollar accumulation, were sorely tempted, in the scramble for wealth, to override those limitations by speculating. The usual rules of judgment were suspended; many a businessman trustingly took the advice of an unknown investment broker, oracular tip sheets, or reassuring voices out of the ether like that of "The Old Counsellor" praising Insull securities.

Optimism, faith in the unsinkability of American business, was the basis even of the old-line services. Their vital theory was simpler than most people supposed: widespread confidence meant essential economic health. After polling their clients to determine whether they felt bullish, these advisers fed that optimism back to their subscribers as a recommendation to buy without stint or limit. Infinite hope thus became a trick done with multiple mirrors. Professor Cox's findings show that the forecasters' batting averages steadily grew worse between 1920 and 1929.

Failure of the forecasters to anticipate the Great Depression stemmed directly from the "confidence and optimism" found in business circles. The most famous prophet of woe was Roger Babson, whose waverings, like the graphs on one of his own Babson-charts, illustrate the struggle between a man's better judgment and that cheerful American mandate, "Don't knock — boost!" In June of 1929 his outlook had been apprehensive — hence unpopular. But in July his Service countermanded fate, announcing that "for the rest of 1929 business activity should be above the normal line."

Yet, like another Puritan in Babylon, Babson continued to be troubled by his law of reaction. For the third year in succession, he told the National Business Conference on September 5, 1929, that "sooner or later a crash is coming . . . sooner or later the stock market boom will collapse like the Florida boom." The report of this speech, over the tickers of the New York Stock Exchange that afternoon, started a miniature avalanche of selling that wiped out several million dollars in the open-market value of securities. The irony of this incident lay in the fact that in past years Wall Street had paid no particular attention to the sage of Babson Park. Its nerves were obviously bad.

But the market rallied, then headed straight into the debacle of October — whose sudden advent, under the continued bullishness of the Babson services, probably surprised the prophet as much as anybody. Yet his vague warnings were recalled, and his prestige rocketed. Some, however, scolded him for his gloom — notably Irving Fisher, who agreed with Babson on little save the moral beauty of Prohibition. Humbler citizens began to feel somehow that if only Mr. Babson would give the word, the storm he had invoked would roll away.

Very soon, therefore, buckling under group pressure, Babson joined the boosters. Through 1930 he repeatedly hailed the beginning of better times, offering in the early summer "to stake my reputation that general business has seen its worst"; in February, 1931, with his happy phraseology Babson announced that "the best business beacons suggest that fundamental business conditions have struck bottom." (This was the time when Brookmire more cautiously was working out the image of "the U-shaped bottom of the Depression," which it might take the nation months if not years to traverse.) In those early days, when they were hanging Old Man Depression as once they hanged the Kaiser, a prophet of woe was regarded as a traitor to his tribe.

3

BUT as the depression, moving like a glacier, took its toll of discredited seers, it grew clear that the era of glib business forecasting was over. Beginning in 1934, the cold sobriety demanded by the Securities and Exchange Commission fell upon the utterances of Wall Street.

Now ascendant rose another star of prophecy, the news letter promising the low-down on current events, the news behind the news from which future developments might be gauged. Its origins stemmed, not from the age of confidence, but from

the earlier aftermath of skepticism left by the Creel Committee, the claims of propaganda and counter-propaganda, censorship, and wartime tampering with news near its source. Soon began a spate of "now it can be told" books; presently two young Yale men, Briton Hadden and Henry Luce, started a phenomenally successful "news magazine" that offered the inside story of the news without obvious editorial comment; and Will Rogers could raise a laugh by drawling, "All I know is what I read in the papers."

Percival H. Whaley, former lawyer and newspaperman with the Curtis publications, is the pioneer of the modern news letter. Bolder and franker comment on national events, present or impending, was desired by those businessmen who got around, and who prided themselves on being hardheaded realists. In partnership with another Philadelphia lawyer-journalist, Henry M. Eaton, Whaley launched the Whaley-Eaton Service in 1918. It won swift success. From its circle of internationally-minded clients — diplomats, statesmen, bankers, industrialists — Whaley-Eaton solicited questions that often turned out to be well ahead of the pace set by newspaper thinking.

From a host of imitators, one formidable rival appeared in the person of Willard Monroe Kiplinger, Ohio journalist and financial writer, who in 1920 started his "Washington Letters" and soon won attention as the most breezy commentator of the tribe. For years he has maintained the largest circulation in this field, now conservatively estimated at 50,000 subscribers. The weekly Letter on white paper is supplemented by a green Agricultural Letter, an occasional brown Labor Letter, and a blue Tax Letter. They offer a grandstand seat at the passing show of Washington. Here are excitement, color, and rumor — the last sometimes flushed from the Potomac brakes only to be shot on the rise as a canard. The tone of urgency is heightened by underlining and by printing words in solid capitals. Omission of the definite article creates the air of a messenger's breathlessness, posting with hot news from the Capital.

Once a year, usually in January, Kiplinger holds open house to explain his methods, in a buff-colored "Shop-Talk Letter." He tells subscribers about his permanent staff of eight men, who do the leg work. From some two hundred office calls which they make weekly, masses of material are reaped, then in editorial conference winnowed down to four pages. On Friday night the editor-in-chief in person writes the whole Letter, which is revised and mailed on Saturday, in time to greet every client at his desk on Monday morning. The assay of such professional

visiting, Kiplinger finds, is higher than that of cocktail chat. No mystery clings to his methods, he assures subscribers, beyond the identity of those informants who supply fact and forecast — because their frank replies to frank questions rest on their anonymity.

With broad trends, philosophical reflections, and high-brow economic analyses Kiplinger has little truck. His professed aim is to survey the current scene “in hard-boiled businessman fashion,” telling his clients that they are “a class of men who can not be ‘kidded’ through the subterfuge of omission of unpleasant matters.” Constantly he stresses the importance of keeping a cool head while picking one’s way through the maze of rumor, and proffers his services as guide.

“Write or wire us if you need help,” he has often adjured his clients. “Query us on whispers, and we shall try to explain the facts. For business reasons it is important to maintain mental health,” he wrote in August, 1936, after exploding such horrendous stories as that Roosevelt was getting ready to call off the election and invoke martial law, that Landon meant Fascism, that a Jewish pogrom might break forth any day. (Those early years of the New Deal witnessed as much ill-founded sensationalism, among the prophets, as the Hoover regime had seen of mistaken optimism. On September 8, 1933, for instance, Babson told his Institute — as reported in the *New York Times* — that the current deadlock between capital and labor in America would soon be broken by the upsurge and “temporary dictatorship” of the middle class. “This dictatorship,” he added, “will take the form of Fascism. Of course Fascism is only a temporary bridge in the natural growth of a nation.”)

Like all prognosticators, Kiplinger lays claim to strict impersonality. “Use these Letters for BUSINESS SLANT, not for partisan political slant,” he will declare, adding, when an event unpleasant to many of his clientele is imminent, “Appraisal is cold, without regard to hopes of either side.” Again and again, however, the political sights foreseen in his crystal ball have been somewhat clouded by wishfulness, either his own or that of his subscribers, whose opinions he invites. In the summer of 1932 he kept placing Hoover well ahead of Roosevelt in electoral votes (“By the way, you pronounce it Rose-velt — two syllables”), but as the election drew on, he began to doubt his own figures. Early in the next election year Kiplinger began alluding to “the slipping-Roosevelt-of-1936” as against “the popular-Roosevelt-of-1933,” but in late October, 1936, he foretold the incumbent’s re-election even though “Roosevelt’s margin of 1932 is obviously

cut way down this year.” Three days before the election he conceded Roosevelt only 277 electoral votes instead of the 523 he received.

Once more his clients, in Kiplinger’s phrase, had to sit and “wait Roosevelt out.” At the beginning of 1940, Kiplinger flatly announced: “Roosevelt will not be the next President.” On the eve of election day, November 2, 1940, Kiplinger confessed that no prediction was possible: “All that we can honestly say is that it looks like a toss-up.” Most recently, three days before the 1944 election, Kiplinger “coldly” picked Roosevelt to win.

Kiplinger owes much success to the creation of a friendly bond with his clients, an intimacy pitched midway between that of a club and a family. Occasionally the touch of whimsy gleamed. Christmas at Kiplinger’s was always a little Dickensian. Up to 1929 that annual Letter was written by William the Office Boy, full of folksy puns and ribbing of his employers. In his last appearance, on Christmas Eve, 1928, William confessed that despite the firm’s forecast for Hoover he had voted for Al Smith (being, like the janitor, a pious Democrat), and had made \$112 on the stock market. By the next Christmas, poor William probably had lost his shirt; his Letter, at any rate, vanished forever, its place being taken on Christmas Eve, 1929, by a sober bulletin about Federal Farm Board policies.

Later years revived traditional Christmas greetings from Kiplinger to his circle, but no longer in the vein of the twenties, when our hearts were young and gay. The Tax Letter of December 19, 1936, following Roosevelt’s second election, is typical: “Despite taxes, Merry Christmas.” Even more leaden is the echo of season’s greetings on December 21, 1940, after the third election, rounding off a forecast of “national socialism” as the result of tightening Federal controls and the approach of war: “It’s not a pretty pattern. Anyway, for the present, a Merry Christmas.”

4

KIPLINGER’S anticipation of World War II began as early as 1935, when on the invasion of Ethiopia he foretold “general war in Europe, perhaps early in 1937, not later than 1940.” In the subsequent days of crisis, reasoning from past stereotypes betrayed Kiplinger into a good many errors. He ventured the guess, in the late summer of 1940, that the American Legion would throw great strength toward the isolationist bloc — basing his conjecture almost certainly upon the 1939 Legion Convention, with no allowance for the changing mood which, after the fall of France, raised by many degrees the interven-

tionist warmth of the next Convention. Assumption that Stimson's appointment as Secretary of War was merely a political bid for Republican votes led Kiplinger to announce on October 12, 1940: "Stimson WILL resign from War after elections. It's now certain" — a forecast to which he stubbornly clung as elections came and went. Through implicit faith in old signposts, he also cast Leon Henderson as head of the Defense Advisory Commission, because "Roosevelt won't trust industrialists with power over broad policies" — although the appointment finally went to the board chairman of U. S. Steel, Edward R. Stettinius, Jr.

Kiplinger apparently had no inkling of Hitler's invasion of Russia in June, 1941, and then like many commentators — some with Russian experience — announced at the start that Germany would win an easy victory. On August 2, this event was expected within sixty days; by mid-August, only a month longer was assumed. All through that summer, however, Kiplinger reported a general Washington forecast that we would be in a shooting war "by October," while he complained steadily at the lack of Administration frankness on this score. In October his auguries for war with Japan steadily grew bolder, although he was prone to see that nation's defeat in six months, at the longest. On November 29, Kiplinger declared that if Japan fought at all, war would come within thirty days. The next Letter, on December 6, avowed that Washington is "prepared for the worst."

In the course of hostilities his Letters have done valuable service, advising those who want or have war contracts, disseminating information about Federal controls and regulations that local newspapers miss, and explaining tax laws in a popular style. Now and then, in mellow mood, he has addressed himself to long-range subjects such as rarely figured in earlier days. The last Letter of the year 1943 was a forecast of population trends in the United States, which was brought usefully back to heel by thoughts on the economic effect of war babies: registered upon makers of infants' clothing now, ten years hence upon manufacturers of teenage goods, with the prospect of crowded grade schools in the 1950's and high schools late in the decade, with a bumper crop of college students in 1960, and a brisk demand for household goods about 1965 as war babies become homemakers.

5

A MAJOR reason for many business forecasters' poor showing, in the early thirties, arose from their

failure to reckon with the impact of foreign affairs upon domestic business. The psychology of our Hawley-Smoot tariff days was not a little smug. This economic isolationism failed to see that financial crises in England and Germany — leading to the Hoover moratorium and later to Roosevelt's abandonment of the gold standard — were closely enmeshed with our own destiny. In educating American businessmen to greater global consciousness, no service has played a larger role than Whaley-Eaton. Among its estimated eight to ten thousand subscribers, the majority trust its judgments, while a minority suspect it of Anglophilia.

In calling the turns of the present war, Whaley-Eaton's record is checkered. Astute forecasts are drawn apparently from high officials who talk more candidly to Whaley-Eaton's socially-minded staff than to the press. On the other hand, a well-bred dignity of tone has sometimes lulled readers into complacency, while the newspapers in their raucous way were getting nearer the truth.

Seven years ago, Whaley-Eaton's listening posts in London and Paris caught all the echoes of appeasement, and believed too many. In May, 1938, Hitler's meeting with Mussolini in Rome led to the inference that "the cause of peace is helped rather than hindered" — a hopeful French interpretation — and London was confidently quoted declaring that Hitler would never dismember Czechoslovakia against the wishes of England and France. On August 16, Whaley-Eaton cited informed opinion that Britain and France were too strong for Germany to handle, with or without Italy, and that "Hitler agrees with this opinion." By the end of this month, with the divided mind of a forecaster, Whaley-Eaton admitted that "war could break out tomorrow — or this afternoon," but closed this Letter with comfortable words: "The best opinion is that European war can and will be prevented."

On the eve of Munich, September 13, 1938, Whaley-Eaton mingled scare rumor with wishful assurance. "There are reports that Germany, not being too certain of British inaction, has earmarked 1,500 planes for a raid on London. This seems doubtful. These planes might reach London before the British could set up an adequate defense but 'how many could get back to Germany'? The French air force, fully prepared, would block the way." Yet in next week's Letter appears this sage remark: "The weak point in the [Allies'] plan is that Russia and Germany might reach an accord in the coming months. . . . Such a combination, if it looked westward, might doom France and Britain." This bulletin also predicted a Japanese military alliance with the Axis "in the near future," while

the next brushed aside popular talk about Nazi bluffing: "Hitler wants war."

After Munich, Whaley-Eaton began to regard Chamberlain more coolly, ceasing to apply to his policies the earlier label "realistic." Nevertheless, with its chief foreign office in London and its pipelines flowing from Allied, not Axis, chancelleries, Whaley-Eaton itself continued to fall somewhat short of realism. In January, 1939, Hitler's announced resolve to match Britain's submarine strength was taken as pledging a lull in which to build them, which therefore "can guarantee European peace for 1939." Whaley-Eaton's last Letter on this month was headlined "No War"; that of February 28 cited military judgment that Germany, with a young army and a shortage of seasoned officers, "will not be ready for a major war for at least five years. . . . For several years Germany must remain at a disadvantage toward France, whose reservists number about five million men." As storm clouds grew darker that spring, in flashes of candor Whaley-Eaton gave its clients truer glimpses of the state of Europe, even though such gleams came from the hesitant Allies, not from capitals where decisions about war were being made.

Still, the Whaley-Eaton record during those delirious days was better than most. In general, the infallibility of seers in this crisis sank, through sheer wishfulness, to a low comparable to that of 1929. As one instance out of many, we might take the *Reader's Digest* for September, 1939. It featured an article by former President Hoover, boldly asserting that France and England would not fall if attacked, "but if they do fall, the exhaustion of the dictators will be such that these countries will leave us alone for a quarter of a century at least."

In prognosticating our war in the Pacific, Whaley-Eaton wrote shrewdly on October 28, 1941: "War with Japan is now regarded in both London and Washington as practically inevitable. It is also believed that Tokyo will strike without warning — unless the Allies beat her to the draw." The service's chief miscalculation was made on the score of Japanese strength, and this despite Whaley-Eaton's Tokyo connections. On October 7, 1941, they reported: "Competent American military observers have little respect for the Japanese armies," and a month later stated that Japan had been so hamstrung by the embargo that if war broke out she could be handled summarily. "It is possible that this could be done rather rapidly. Nor need it require the dispatch of American troops in quantity. . . . Singapore is no longer weak. . . . The Japanese population is war weary, and the best of its manhood is already in China."

Unluckily enough, Whaley-Eaton's bulletin on the historic date of December 7, 1941, veered toward minimizing the momentary situation in the Far East, seeing greater immediate significance in "critical negotiations" between Berlin and Vichy. "Japan's sedate statesmen," we are told, "agree with their naval high command that war with the United States would be suicidal. But they cannot control their army. . . . Warlike statements by the Japanese Premier do not mean much. They are for home consumption and to encourage the Axis."

6

THE major weakness of most forecasters, as indicated here, lies in their too patent eagerness to adopt a bullish, complaisant, reassuring outlook; in other words, to act upon the axiom "The customer be pleased" — which, though successful in nearly every other business, is no ideal motto for forecasters. One notable exception, however, is a service which offers the unsweetened cup of prophecy, with a brisk air of stoicism that some of its subscribers have been prone to mistake for sadism. Several years ago the *New Yorker* described this outfit as "Cassandra, Inc." It has achieved, however, the steadiest record for accuracy among current forecasters.

This is the Research Institute of America, whose master minds are Leo Cherne, young lawyer from the Bronx, Carl Hovgard, former Kansas Bible salesman, and Leon Henderson, late chief of OPA and the probable future economic director of Occupied Germany. This organization started in 1935, from a sudden hunch about the need for explaining the Social Security Act to bewildered businessmen. From a one-room office and a two-man staff, the Institute has expanded into a building named in its honor, a Manhattan roster of experts, and a large and active Washington staff. Fortnightly appears the Institute's *Business and Legislation Report*, neatly bound in pale-blue covers with silver eyelets, an embossed seal, and marginal rubrics. Its idiom is also a little lush, but its sense assays remarkably well.

Most thorough and specific of all such services, in its business analyses — devoting three or four pages to a topic which others might dismiss in as many lines — this *Report* represents hard work by bright young economic and legal experts rather than the more readable gleanings of Capitol Hill gossip. Only occasionally does the *Report* deviate into such personal dicta as its well-quoted remark about the late Wendell Willkie, early in 1940, that

“ideologically this one-time campus socialist comes closer to antipathy for concentration of big industry than the Hyde Park country squire.”

Clients of the Institute have to make their contribution to the common pool of business facts by answering a questionnaire about production, sales, profits, and the like every three months. Other services of course invite partnership with their readers. Kiplinger invites the opinion and prediction of his subscribers; similarly Whaley-Eaton examines the bubbles of perplexity that are beginning to rise.

Whether the Institute's *Report* is truly objective has been a subject for debate. Certain liberals, generally outside the pale of subscribers, have condemned the Institute as pandering to reactionary business — in telling executives, for example, how they may cut all the legal corners around the Wagner Act. In reply, the Institute can claim that its recommendations at least *are* strictly legal, none having ever been invalidated by the courts. More often, numerous readers among the Institute's twenty to thirty thousand subscribing firms suspect that it caters to the New Deal. So far as prediction goes, however, the Institute's most spectacular record has been built upon guessing the mind of the Supreme Court, in both conservative and liberal moods. Shrewd knowledge of personalities and of their reaction both to legal issues and to the imponderables of public opinion, plus an admitted streak of luck, has led the Institute correctly to foretell for the past ten years every decision of the Court affecting the New Deal, sometimes against odds that seemed long.

Eight years ago, when lawyers of the National Association of Manufacturers, the United States Chamber of Commerce, and the Liberty League were confidently proclaiming that the Supreme Court — nemesis of AAA and NRA — would shortly invalidate the Wagner-Connery Act, Cherne told his clients that the Court would uphold the Act and that they had better prepare to make the best of it. The five-to-four decision of April, 1937, delivered him from the growing wrath of his patrons. Similarly, early in the same year he predicted the victory of the CIO, with its instrument of the sit-down strike, over General Motors. Almost a thousand subscribers quit over this “ridiculous” forecast, and the Institute probably would have been ruined if the *fait accompli* had not arrived in the nick of time.

Also unpopular with a vocal minority of businessmen was the Institute's branding of Franco as a Fascist, during the Spanish Civil War. In the face of considerable clamor, Cherne and his associates declined to “retract.” In respect to wars and rumors of wars the Institute has been almost as successful

as on the domestic front, though without Whaley-Eaton's wealth of detail. In June, 1939, Cherne published a book on adjusting private business to war, envisaging priorities, price ceilings, and wage controls in much the way they have happened. His success was less the result of second sight than of his intimacy with Leon Henderson and other planners who were not sorry to see the public braced for the inevitable. But, beyond a few pacifists who cried him down as a warmonger, not many noticed this book.

More read his sequel on mobilization day, published a year later, containing information supplied by his friend Louis Johnson, Assistant Secretary of War, and from Cherne's contacts as lecturer at the Army Industrial College. This forehandedness helped to make the Institute a kind of unofficial spokesman for M Day two years before Pearl Harbor, and for V Day at least a year before the Allied invasion of Europe.

As for the war itself, as early as 1938 the Institute took as its keynote in foreign affairs “Watch the Far East!” In the spring of 1939 it foretold war provocation as coming from Asia rather than Europe, and incidentally predicted Roosevelt's third term. (Anticipation of a fourth term, early in 1944, probably took less daring than a concurrent forecast that the Little Steel formula would stand unrevised through election day.) Present horoscopes announce a depression to follow victory in Europe, with cutbacks in production so severe as eventually to throw nineteen million men out of jobs, while promoting the retreat of organized labor, a greater centralization of business, and the ascendancy of pressure groups. “An upswing beginning about the middle of 1946” is a sop to the hopeful.

To hazard a forecast about forecasters, it seems certain that the golden age of investment counseling and stock-market prediction has gone forever, but that the conservative business services will continue to survive by mixing cautious prognostics of “trends” with their solid work of fact-finding and analysis, much as they did before the last Great War. In most respects, however, that pre-1914 world, which now seems like a summer of idyllic serenity, has vanished never to return. The anxious thirties, approaching the crest of a global war, will find their counterpart in the latter forties, seething and boiling in the backwash of that war. In such a world of flux, national and international politics have stolen the show, as well as the real power, from big business. Those prophets are now in demand who see, or think they can see, over the surge of current events into the next trough whither we are tending.

OPENING THE SKY

American Proposals at Chicago

by WILLIAM A. M. BURDEN

1

WE ARE SO used to thinking of aviation as a technical subject — a matter of horsepower, speed, stratospheric flight, and jet propulsion — that we are likely to forget that the greatest obstacles to international air travel have been political and legal rather than technical.

The past twenty-five years have been a period of near anarchy in international air transport. Nations imposed on the operation of commercial aircraft restrictions which were almost incredibly severe in comparison to those regulating merchant ships, which are generally free to enter the ports of the world. Special permission was required merely to fly over a country, and many nations were selfish about granting even this privilege, hoping that they could trade their geography for some other advantage regardless of the effect on air commerce. Still more complicated negotiations were necessary before an airline could do business in a foreign country. The permission to pick up and discharge traffic was often restricted by limiting the number of trips that could be flown, regardless of the amount of traffic available.

There were no universally accepted technical codes for international airlines, although uniform procedures and reasonably high minimum standards were obviously desirable for efficient and safe operation. Finally, there was no world-wide international organization concerned with civil aviation.

These difficulties reflected the inadequacy of the pre-war international agreements on civil aviation — the Paris Convention of 1919 and the Habana Convention of 1928. The very existence of two such agreements — the former largely confined to European and the latter to American countries —

implied a division of world aviation into compartments in a manner hardly consistent with the universal nature of air transport.

This obsolete international machinery was obviously incapable of coping with the utterly changed conditions of post-war air transport. The necessity of developing a new world agreement on air transport and air navigation, which would truly open the air for commercial aviation, and of creating a new set of technical standards was what we faced at the International Civil Aviation Conference when it met in Chicago last November.

The main point at issue at Chicago was whether a degree of real freedom of operation would be granted to commercial airlines by international agreement or whether air transport would be controlled by an international commission. The problem was further complicated in the public mind by the decision of the U.S.S.R. not to participate.

The Soviet Union's abstention would seem to indicate that Russia does not intend to permit the civil airlines of other nations to cross her territory, and that it will be some time before she will engage in long-range international air transport on a large scale. Because of these limitations in policy, the U.S.S.R. obviously had no immediate interest in the most vital subjects under discussion at Chicago. Fortunately, despite the vast extent of Soviet territories, they lie athwart only a few of the air routes connecting the principal population areas of the world. The conference left the door open for eventual Soviet participation in the international organization which it created.

Of the fifty-four nations represented at Chicago the United States was the leader of the group advocating freedom. We believe that this new industry is economically sound but that it must be released from undue restriction if it is to achieve its potentialities. Our own international airlines are already nearly self-supporting. We feel that

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when the technical advances made during the war are applied to commercial aviation, many countries will find that their international air transport companies will fast shake off their dependence upon the national treasury and become profitable enterprises. Given free operation and technical progress stimulated by competition, a very large volume of traffic will almost certainly be available to the airlines of the world. Under such conditions there will be ample opportunity for all who wish to fly.¹

2

FREEDOM of operation is desirable for countries with highly developed aircraft industries, which naturally wish to sell their services to as large a market as possible. It is equally advantageous to a vast body of travelers and shippers. We Americans feel it is also to the interest of small nations which are competent in aircraft operation, for it makes a far wider market open to them than would be possible under any quota system of dividing traffic. Because of our confidence in the commercial future of air transport, we are unsympathetic to the theory that it must be strictly regulated by an international commission at this early stage of its development. Regulation may prove necessary ultimately, but we feel that it should wait until experience has shown what the economic potentials and the problems of international air transport actually are.

We recognize that some will say that we are motivated by self-interest in proposing a policy which would permit the most efficient operator to attract the most traffic. True, we have a technical head-start over the war-ravaged countries of Europe because of our huge production of transport airplanes and our wide experience in long-distance operation. We have no desire to take unfair advantage of this position and have announced our willingness to make our transport aircraft available, as soon as they can be spared from war work, to all countries which recognize the right of friendly intercourse with others. We point out that our supremacy in air transport is not solely due to the accidents of war; we were leaders in the field long before 1939. We feel that it would be criminal to condemn world air transport to permanent restriction in an attempt to offset a temporary advantage held by one country. This in brief was the philosophy of the American delegation at Chicago.

¹ The conference could not deal with the question of whether the Axis nations will be allowed to engage in commercial aviation. This problem is left to the Peace Conference.

A small segment of informed American opinion, led by Pan American Airways, disagrees with this position and maintains that — regardless of the effect on the world as a whole — the self-interest of the United States would be best served by continuing the pre-war system of bilateral negotiation. Pan American argues that foreign shipping companies enjoy a tremendous competitive advantage over United States lines because of lower labor costs, and that the same situation will develop in air transport unless the entry of foreign airlines into the United States is severely restricted.

Many others, including other airlines, hold the analogy to be inaccurate. They point out that Pan American's operating costs have so far been substantially lower than those of its foreign competitors. Since there is much less difference between American and foreign wage rates for the highly skilled labor required for aircraft operation and construction than there is in the rates paid the unskilled labor employed in shipping, they believe that the efficient operation of United States airlines will go far to offset differences in wage scales. Even under bilateralism we could not expect to serve foreign countries without allowing them to serve the United States.

The Latin American nations took the same liberal position as did the United States delegation. Despite the fact that many of them operate extensive internal airline systems and that some expect to operate international routes before long, they regard themselves as consumers as well as operators of air transport. They feel that they will benefit from as much air communication as possible with the rest of the world, even though part of that communication is provided by foreigners. Even under the restrictive pre-war system, they had freely granted European and United States trunk airlines permission to operate through their territories and had found it possible to develop flourishing air carriers of their own, side by side with the growing traffic carried on the through routes.

China and the lesser nations of the Far East were moved by the same considerations, as were those small European countries, led by Holland and Sweden, which had been successful in placing their air transport on a sound commercial basis before 1940.

Opposed to this philosophy of freedom was the doctrine of control proposed by the United Kingdom, Canada, France and a few other countries of continental Europe. These nations laid great emphasis on the importance of assuring "order in the air" by placing air transport under the economic control of an international commission. Control,

they said, is required to prevent the subsidized operation of large numbers of almost empty aircraft by countries which wanted to run airlines for prestige purposes, regardless of the traffic they could attract. It is also necessary to assure every nation a "fair share" of international air traffic.

It was not surprising that economic control of air transport should be advocated by this group of states. Most European nations operated their airlines as government monopolies rather than commercial businesses. They were accustomed to controlling all types of international trade through pools or cartels and they saw no reason why air transport should not be subject to similar restraint.

Control appealed to them for another reason: they were concerned about their future position in air transport. As war-ravaged nations, they felt that it would be a long time before their airlines could compete successfully with the United States, with its unlimited supply of transport aircraft and its great experience in long-distance operation. The offer of the American delegation to make modern transport aircraft available on non-discriminatory terms did not entirely allay this underlying fear.

It is interesting to note that the air transport policies advocated by the United States and Great Britain in Chicago represented a reversal of the historic economic policies of these countries. The United States, long an ardent protectionist nation, appeared as an eloquent advocate of free trade in the air; and Great Britain, long identified with the gospel of free trade and freedom of the seas, apparently forgot her bold assaults on mercantilism in the nineteenth century and favored restriction and control in the air.

This change in position is perhaps symptomatic of the change in the relative industrial strength of the two powers. The United States seems motivated by the same combination of self-interest and idealism that moved Great Britain to assume her historic attitude towards ocean transport. And the importance of free communication and transport to the world lends moral support to the present American position.

The handing over of civil aviation to an international commission would in itself be no cure for the dilemmas of international air transport. The practical effect of commission control can only be judged on the basis of proposals for the make-up of the commission and the rules under which it would operate.

The United Kingdom suggested that the international commission control the number of trips which the airlines of the various countries might fly on a given route and have the power to set fares

upon appeal by an interested nation. The United States was fundamentally opposed to arbitrary control by a commission. Neither did the American group share the British fear that countries would indulge in a vast subsidy race to keep their airlines operating at a high level regardless of the traffic carried. Nevertheless we were willing to give serious consideration to frequency control by a semi-automatic formula, to be applied by a commission, which would make it impossible for such rivalry to occur.

3

LENGTHY discussions of various possible formulas took place among delegates of the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. Those proposed by the United Kingdom and Canada were based on the principle that an airline might fly more trips only when its existing services had been more than two-thirds full for a considerable period. This principle was acceptable to us, but an insuperable obstacle arose when the United Kingdom contended that only the traffic carried direct from one's home country — as distinct from the traffic picked up en route — should count in establishing the initial frequency of service and in increasing the frequency.

Intermediate traffic is absolutely essential to the economic operation of long-distance routes, and it is on such routes that air transport can perform its greatest service to mankind. The importance of intermediate traffic is indicated by the experience of our long-distance routes in Latin America. On the Pan American Airways route from New York to Buenos Aires, for example, only 30 per cent of the traffic carried to Rio de Janeiro is traffic originating in the United States, the remainder consisting of persons who board the airliners at points outside the United States. When one gets down as far as Buenos Aires, the proportion of traffic from the United States falls to 15 per cent.

Under the British proposal that the amount of service operated be governed by the amount of through traffic, a United States line on a route from New York to Calcutta via London, Rome, and Cairo might be flying three schedules a day to London but only two a week to Cairo and one every two weeks to Calcutta. The number of trips which could be flown on the further sections of long routes would be so low as to make the service unattractive to the traveler and uneconomical for the operator. It would probably be impossible, if such a rule were applied, for a United States line to operate on a business basis beyond Western Europe or, in South America, beyond Rio de Janeiro and Lima.

A limitation on carrying intermediate traffic hardly seems consistent with the theory that one of the main purposes of international regulation is to prevent the running of largely empty aircraft. In fact the only argument advanced by the United Kingdom for limiting the pickup of intermediate traffic was that, unless it were limited, the through trunk airlines would carry so much of the traffic between countries thousands of miles from their homeland that it would be impossible for locally owned airlines to build up a satisfactory international business.

It was contended by the United States that through schedules on these long-distance routes would be so infrequent and irregular, compared with the competing local international services, that the local services would always carry the bulk of the traffic between adjacent countries.

Here again the solicitude of the British for the smaller powers appeared to be misplaced. At Chicago the majority of the small countries indicated that they did not fear competition from trunk route services; on the contrary, they would find them a convenience for their citizens. This is not surprising, for the provision proposed by the British would have made it impossible for any small country to become an important carrier of the world's traffic by air. Norway, for example, could never have been a great seafaring nation if she had been limited to carrying Norwegian trade. Nor could the Dutch KLM airline have become a great carrier between Europe and the Far East had Holland been limited to Dutch traffic. Control on this basis would not have been a logically justifiable attempt to secure "order in the air," but restriction in a narrow sense.

4

ONCE it became clear that there was an honest but irreconcilable difference of opinion on the subject of control, the conference abandoned the idea of frequency control by formula or by an international commission with regulatory power. Taking the opposite tack, it proceeded to establish as much freedom of air transport operation as the varying points of view of the nations present permitted.

The discussion of freedom was in terms of the so-called "five freedoms of the air." These freedoms — which are really privileges, since every country reserves the sovereignty of its air space — are as follows: —

1. The privilege to fly across the territory of a contracting state without landing.
2. The privilege to land for non-traffic purposes.

3. The privilege to put down passengers, mail, and cargo taken on in the territory of the state whose nationality the aircraft possesses.

4. The privilege to take on passengers, mail, and cargo destined for the territory of the state whose nationality the aircraft possesses.

5. The privilege to take on passengers, mail, and cargo destined for the territory of any other contracting state and the privilege to put down passengers, mail, and cargo coming from any such territory.

Presented in this artificially worded fashion, the privileges look as complicated as a mathematical formula. It was necessary to separate them because the nations of the world are just nibbling at the idea of freedom of the sky. Some are willing to accept it in only tiny doses, and others in larger amounts.

The first two freedoms may be called "privileges of flight" since they grant no privilege to pick up or discharge traffic. Freedoms three through five might be called "privileges to trade," since they pertain to doing business in the countries granting them. All five of these freedoms are necessary to the sound economic operation of international air transport. Taken together, they would make it possible for an airline to operate without any further special permission on any direct route from and to its homeland, picking up and dropping traffic at all countries along the route, as do steamship lines, and flying as many schedules as the traffic justified. They would not permit the carrying of internal traffic between two points within a foreign country.

This is the objective, the ideal toward which the world began moving at Chicago, moving somewhat hesitantly, it is true, but still moving. Thirty nations agreed to grant the two "privileges of flight," and twenty to grant all five privileges. All the Chicago agreements come into force when accepted by the governments of the states that signed them, or when adhered to by states that did not sign them.

All privileges were granted on a provisional basis terminable on a year's notice. They were granted only for reasonably direct routes from the homeland, thus establishing the principle that the legitimate purpose of international air transport is to connect one's home country with the other nations of the world. They were embodied in supplementary documents so that all nations might adhere to the main air navigation convention, while only those which wished to give and receive the various freedoms need adhere to the supplementary agreements.

5

THE establishment of internationally accepted modern technical standards and procedures was

essential if the airlines of the world were to operate safely and smoothly in the post-war period. As transport aircraft speed through the sky, perhaps crossing half a dozen small countries in a dozen hours, it is necessary that there be universal agreement as to certain technical matters. Obviously it would be confusing and unsafe to require an international airline to circle airports to the left before landing in one country, and to the right before landing in the next. Ground radio facilities should be standardized as much as possible so that transport planes in international flight do not have to carry a multitude of receivers and transmitters. Meteorological information must be transmitted in standard codes, and aviation maps must use standard symbols.

The task was not an easy one, despite Mayor La Guardia's amiably facetious remark that agreement should be easy in this field because "everyone is against bad weather." It is a tribute to the sincerity and objectivity of the technicians that they were able in the brief space of a month to agree tentatively on, and to draft, technical annexes covering twelve varied and important phases of air transport operation. If the conference had accomplished nothing else, this work would have justified all the time and effort expended.

The conference made a third contribution by drafting a new Convention on International Civil Aviation, which sets forth modernized basic regulations governing international civil aviation and establishes a truly world-wide aviation organization. The new International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) will come into being on a three-year interim basis (with a seat at Montreal) when twenty-six nations have formally accepted the Chicago Interim Agreement on Civil Aviation, and on a permanent basis when the same number of countries have ratified the Chicago Convention. It is made up of an Assembly, on which all the contracting states are represented, each state having a single vote, and a Council of twenty-one members responsible to the Assembly.

The ICAO will be principally advisory and consultative, but instead of being limited to the technical field, as was the International Commission for Air Navigation established by the Paris Convention, it will have important economic responsibilities. It is responsible for collecting and publishing information relating to the operation of international air services, including the costs of operation and subsidies paid. It is empowered to "investigate, at the request of any contracting State, any situation which may appear to present avoidable obstacles to the development of international air navigation."

If it is of the opinion that the airports and air navigation facilities of a contracting state are inadequate, it may, if that state consents and within the limit of available funds, build, maintain, and administer the necessary facilities. It is responsible for adopting international standards and recommended practices and keeping these practices up to date by amendment of the technical annexes of the Convention.

What will come after Chicago? The conference made an excellent beginning: subject to formal approval by their respective governments, thirty-nine nations have agreed on a single air navigation convention and upon the draft of a single set of technical standards of international flying. They have agreed to create a single international aviation organization to administer the convention and to study international civil aviation. Most important of all, the first step has been taken in granting privileges of free operation to commercial airlines by international agreement. Thirty nations have exchanged the privilege of transit and non-traffic stops. More will doubtless agree to this privilege later.

Much more limited progress was made in granting air transport real freedom to do business. Only twenty countries, comprising 35 per cent of the world's population, have so far agreed to exchange the five freedoms which grant practically complete freedom of the air except for local traffic — cabotage. They include the United States and China; three European countries, Sweden, Holland, and Denmark; Mexico and nine small Latin American states. Many bilateral agreements will still be necessary to begin post-war air transport operations.

The real test of the success of Chicago will be whether the small but immensely significant area of freedom to trade expands. The conviction of Great Britain and many other European countries that restriction is necessary is based on factors which may well change as the world returns to normal. Britain's dependence on the export of goods and services will continue, but when she and the other war-ravaged countries again have their airlines operating normally, they will have more confidence in their ability to compete effectively for world air markets. If, as we believe, long-distance, through services prove not to interfere seriously with local operations, the imagined perils of the fifth freedom will disappear. Finally, if world air travel expands in the manner in which the United States expects that it will, there will be less fear that the airlines of any nation will starve to death unless guaranteed a "fair share" of available traffic.

WASHING THE YANKS

by EDGAR L. JONES

I

FROM a preliminary glance around Kwajalein, one would suppose that the bomb-blasted Pacific island had been turned over to the Dutch. Windmills stand atop abandoned Japanese pillboxes; they operate in multiple batteries along the shore; they whirl noisily among the tents and Quonset huts. Many times more plentiful on Kwajalein than trees, the windmills do not pump water, as a newcomer would surmise. Their vertical shafts run no further than the nearest barrel or empty gasoline can, whence cometh the familiar slurping sound of Monday morning in the family basement at home. These are clothes-washing windmills in the Rube Goldberg manner, with the tropical zephyrs doing the work that all soldiers and sailors hate most.

When a good washing wind hits an island as crowded as Kwajalein, so many scrap-built windmills go into action that the uninitiated hurriedly report the approach of enemy planes; at least that is what the old-timers on the island claim. Backed by a favorable breeze, the whirling windmill blades force a plunger to churn busily in a soapy tubful of muddy socks and oil-splattered coveralls. In two hours, a week's washing is ready for rinsing and the replacement of buttons, if any man is that particular. The wind is laundryman for every weary serviceman who can stake a claim on some lightweight wood or metal for blades, a broomstick for a shaft, and a funnel for a plunger.

Although varying in size and efficiency of operation, the washmills are now common throughout American-held islands in the Central Pacific. Navy men claim that a Seabee built the first one; the Army vows that the honor goes to one of its Engineers. Among GI's, who always have searched for a way to do bunk fatigue and their washing at the same time, the unknown inventor outranks Edison

or Eli Whitney. To them, washing is a chore to be put off until the last sock is hopelessly dirty.

If American radio stations were to beam their soap operas overseas, they would reach an audience thoroughly receptive to any new schemes to make clothes-washing easy. Unless a serviceman is assigned to a large and modern warship or stationed in an area far removed from front-line operations, laundering is one of his worst problems. The mobile laundry units do an excellent job, but their services are limited to troops who stay in one place long enough to collect their clean clothes. Furthermore, the laundry units which do reach forward areas are needed badly by field hospitals to wash sheets, towels, blankets, and pajamas. Thus the bulk of the men overseas are left with their individual piles of dirty laundry, and after three years they are still looking for a washing method which does not involve scrubbing clothes by hand.

Supply officers continually must be on the watch for men who conveniently lose their dirty clothing in the hope of being issued a new and clean set. Happy is the soldier who chances on enemy stores of clothing. He can use the socks and handkerchiefs as long as he wants, then throw them away.

But if clothes must be washed, gasoline is considered to be the fastest-working cleaning agent. Even if one can "borrow" some 100-octane aviation gas, however, the semi-clean clothes are stiff and irritating to the skin. Also, casualties run high among those who like to smoke while washing. A well-established rule of warfare in North Africa was: "Never offer a light to a friend with clean clothes — he may explode."

Having remembered from the dim days before washing machines that women used to boil their clothes to get them clean, many men have put their dirtiest laundry in a square tin, added water and soap, and then started a huge fire under and around their washing. By using gasoline for fuel, they do not have to wait long for their water to boil. The

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results are varied and always unexpected. Either the bottom of the tin melts away, dousing the fire, or the flames swirl furiously over the top of the tin, covering with soot whatever clothes are not already scorched. Even when the optimistic washerman keeps his fire under control, he is faced sooner or later with the realization that his clothes have become only one shade lighter and still have to be scrubbed.

2

THE easiest way to wash clothes aboard ship is to hang them over the side. That is what any old hand, with not so much as a twinge of conscience, will tell a young sailor at sea for the first time. Looking for the easiest way out of a tedious chore, the sailor ties a line to his shirt and pants and lets them dangle in the churning sea. Several hours later he pulls up his line, while an amused audience gathers round to watch his face. If he has anything left which vaguely resembles shirt and pants, said garments no longer have buttons or pockets, and what used to be Navy blue is now a sickly white.

After such a disheartening experience, the sailor goes back to washing clothes in the traditional Navy manner. The clothes are stretched out flat on a board and attacked with a stiff brush until, after half a dozen washings, they are paper-thin. A powerful soap powder, known for some long-forgotten reason as "squeegee," is issued to men aboard Navy and Merchant Marine vessels. The belief prevails that if one puts clothes to soak in a pail full of squeegee and allows them to stand in a corner of the fo'c'sle long enough, the clothes will get clean by themselves. I have seen men let clothes soak in squeegee so long that a two-inch layer of mold formed on the top, and yet the clothes still had to be scrubbed by hand to get them clean. Try as they will, most servicemen still have not found a painless cure for their washday blues.

Occasionally a man who has had exceptionally bad luck at poker, or whose funds have been depleted by his propensity to roll sevens at wrong moments, will turn to washing as a means of recouping his lost spending money. To take in washing is a desperate measure, resorted to only when friends no longer are willing to advance small loans. From a strictly monetary standpoint, laundering is a fine profession. Any soldier will gladly pay twenty-five cents to have someone else wash his socks, just one pair of socks. Profitable as it may be, the laundryman closes out his business just as soon as he acquires a large enough stake to get back into the poker game.

The only man I ever met who voluntarily stayed in the clothes-washing business for more than two days was a young and enterprising seaman who came ashore on a newly won island while the supply system was still in a disorganized state. The seaman found himself a brand-new washing machine, complete with wringer, which was destined for a medical unit. In the three weeks before the medical search party found its missing appliance, the seaman had earned nearly three hundred dollars.

In the opinion of many grateful GI's, at least the Distinguished Service Cross should be given to members of a chemical processing company stationed for many months in North Africa. A chemical processing company normally functions only in the event that the enemy resorts to gas. Equipped with chemicals and mixing vats, such an outfit impregnates clothing with a secret formula which makes ordinary uniforms gasproof. Its basic piece of apparatus is a huge washing machine, into which the clothes and chemicals are dumped for thorough mixing. After several months of idleness in North Africa, this particular chemical processing company mounted its washing machine on a truck and went on a laundering tour. It would stay with an artillery unit long enough to wash all the dirty clothes in sight and then move on to a tank corps. The traveling laundrymen were nearly as popular as a USO troupe.

The essence of every serviceman's wish-thinking, exclusive of romantic desires, is to be near enough to civilization to have someone else do his washing. I once asked an Australian how it felt to be driven almost to the Suez Canal by Rommel's Afrika Korps. The Aussie shrugged and replied that at least they were then able to send their laundry into Alexandria once a week. Because soldiers are so reluctant to do their own washing, the laundering of uniforms has become a leading profession among Syrians, Polynesians, Italians, Sudanese, Eskimos, and any other civilians whose land has been traversed by Allied troops. The Arabs are perhaps the most persistent laundrymen. It was not unusual for an Arab to approach a group of soldiers in the middle of a battle and offer to do their washing for a cup of sugar or a handful of tea. On one occasion I saw an Arab brought in on a stretcher after he and his camel had wandered through a mine field. While a group of soldiers were standing around watching, the Arab regained consciousness, looked at the assembled men, and weakly said: "Wash-eeng, Yank, do very good wash-eeng!"

Ships stopping at the strategic Red Sea port of Aden are met first by the pilot's launch, then by a Naval boarding party, thirdly by a tug and customs

officials, and finally by a beturbaned gentleman who arrives at the anchorage in a native boat manned by three youthful oarsmen. To curious seamen leaning over the ship's railing, a business card is passed up to introduce: Monsieur Rhat-Rhat, First Class Washerman. Discouraged by long months of doing their own washing, the seamen are very much interested in Mr. Rhat-Rhat's proposition, especially when they are assured that the laundry will be returned the following morning. After bundles of dirty clothes are lowered to the little boat, the first-class washerman relaxes in the stern under a striped awning and signals his crew to head for shore. Usually that is the last ever seen of Mr. Rhat-Rhat or the laundry. When we were at Aden it hadn't rained for nearly two years, which may be Mr. Rhat-Rhat's excuse for delayed service. The seamen's only consolation lies in the fact that it is too hot in the Red Sea to wear clothes, even if they had them back.

Wherever servicemen have gone in this war, they have left behind innumerable bundles of laundry which they never had time to pick up. One hour before our ship was due to leave Alexandria for the invasion of Sicily, I was excited by the sight of our three senior officers standing anxiously at the head of the gangplank. I felt sure that we were to be visited by some high-ranking official, perhaps even an admiral. As the bosun cuttingly informed me, it was

the laundryman, not an admiral, for whom the officers were waiting. We sailed without benefit of clean uniforms, and unless the ship has since revisited Alexandria, three more bundles of military laundry have joined the stockpile of abandoned washing. Shepheard's Hotel in Cairo, for example, is still holding laundry for British officers who went into the desert in 1941, while throughout the Pacific islands there are countless natives who have forsaken their loincloths to wear the GI uniforms of men who thought they had time to get their washing done the easy way.

Only the men in the Air Transport Command seem able to cope with world-wide laundering conditions. Anyone who spent time at an ATC terminal has become accustomed to hearing a pilot or crewman ask a friend to pick up his laundry at the Y.M.C.A. in Calcutta, London, or Melbourne. To other, more earthbound servicemen, washing remains a problem which gives them very little time to sympathize with Americans on the home front who complain that their laundry service is not what it used to be. The clothes-washing windmills are a boon to those men permanently stationed on windy islands, but the majority of the men overseas are still searching for a way to take the scrubbing out of washdays. Anyone with helpful ideas may write to the nearest APO number. The boys in the field will try any system once, providing it sounds easy.



TWO SONNETS

by JOHN BUXTON

AESCHYLUS

HE DID not stand aside when armies came
Out of the dangerous east to Athens' shore
But marched to Marathon, and charged, and bore
The Persians to their ships; and thought it fame
Worthy to stand beside a poet's name,
Even his, who in the bound Prometheus saw
Man's spirit still unbound, whom not the law
Of destiny nor the tyrant Zeus could tame.
He scorned to exult upon the Persians drowned
Who floated past the ships that once they manned,
Knowing the pride that made them choose again
Return and Salamis. He heard the sound
Of weeping in far cities where women scanned
Each face for news, and scanned each face in vain.

WHEN FIRST I WENT TO GREECE

WHEN first I went to Greece I went as one
Who after long exile come home again
Sees that the places of his mind remain
But changed a little by some trick of the sun
That makes them yet more dear. Here once had run
Pheidippides; here Phaedrus once had lain
By cool Ilissus; on this stage did reign
The blind incestuous King; and there was won
Salamis — and all Europe on that day
Put on her splendid youth. But when I go
Back to those dusty valleys I shall stand
Where Greeks in my own time, no less than they
Who fought the Persian hordes here long ago,
Gave glory that we remember in their land.



THE CAT'S-EYE

by JOHN VAN DRUTEN

THE trouble was that he could no longer disentangle what he remembered from what he had been told and what he had read. For he had, quite naturally, read every word that he could find on the subject, ever since they first told him about it when he was fourteen. And there had been a good deal published on it; not only books on famous crimes, which almost always had a chapter on the Cawthra case, but there had been a play and two novels based on it, and a movie based on one of the novels. Jim had read or seen them all.

It was only natural, then, that after all this time his memory and his reading should have become fused, and that he should no longer know which details came from which. The cat's-eye brooch; he knew that he remembered that, because of his childhood fear of it; but Mrs. Pamphlett, and Auntie Lilian's lace bedspread — did he really remember them? He thought he did, but he had read about them so often now, that he could no longer really be sure. It was twenty-seven years ago, and on the other side of the world, and he had been only seven at the time.

But at least Mrs. Pamphlett and the bedspread had existed, whereas there were other things that he thought he remembered, which he could not find in the accounts. Albert, for instance. There was no mention of him anywhere; yet he was sure that he remembered him. How did he fit into the story?

The Voice of the Turtle is the latest play by JOHN VAN DRUTEN to rank as a Broadway hit. Born in London, Mr. van Druten received his LL.B. from the University of London, but he soon deserted law for the theater. In addition to his plays, he has written several novels and a volume of memoirs. This is his first appearance in the *Atlantic*.

There was nobody to tell him, nobody he could ask. Everyone who could have known was dead, or else four thousand miles away. Except her, Auntie Vi-Vi, and nobody knew where she was. She had disappeared entirely after the trial; he had read in some book that she had gone to America; he supposed she would have changed her name. In any case, she was lost, and it was she alone who could have told him about these things for certain.

There had been an afternoon, for example, when he was on his way home from school, and he had run into her with Albert in the street, and she had walked back with him to the house, and asked him not to say anything about it, not to mention seeing Albert, not to anyone, especially his father. She had given him sixpence as a reward for his silence, and he had had quite a time deciding what to spend it on, for he had never had so much money in one lump before. That must have happened, surely? He couldn't have imagined a thing like that.

Here in Chicago in 1939, it was hard to believe that any of it had happened. Kilburn, the drab northwestern suburb of London, in 1912, seemed an improbable place in itself. Had he really lived in it, and gone to school in Salisbury Road, and bought Liquorice Allsorts at the sweetshop at the corner? What connection was there between that small boy and the married young insurance broker with thinning hair at thirty-four, who lived in a small house in Evanston? None that he could see, except continuity, and that was the odd part of it.

He had been born in the United States, and his mother died in giving birth to him. When he was three, his father took him to England. He thought

that he remembered the trip, but he was not sure. Perhaps it was the journey back that he was thinking of. In London, Auntie Lilian became his step-mother. He remembered her, or thought he did, as a tall, languid woman, with huge dreary eyes and untidy masses of black hair that seemed too heavy for her. She was given to invalidism and to lying on sofas, dressed in a tea gown, making lace; there seemed to be yards and yards of it, in his memory.

They lived in a semi-detached house, with dark, sooty evergreens in the front garden, in a long road of exactly similar dwellings. The house, in the photographs he had since seen of it in reports of the case, looked smaller than he remembered it. On the gate was his father's brass plate, announcing: FREDERICK C. CAWTHRA, TEACHER OF MUSIC.

At the back of the house was an oblong piece of garden of which Mr. Cawthra was very fond. Jim used to potter with him on summer evenings when he did his gardening; digging plantains out of the patch of grass they called the lawn; fetching the trowel and the watering pot from the tool shed, trying to make himself useful.

Apart from those evenings, he seemed to spend most of his time in the kitchen, getting in the way of Annie, the general servant, or being regaled by her with stories of crime or illness; she had a large family which included a consumptive sister and an epileptic brother, and she loved to talk about them. The kitchen was in the basement, and there was always strong, sweet tea and cold bread-pudding.

Upstairs, the house was dark, summer and winter, for Auntie Lilian could not bear the sunlight and kept the shades drawn; from the back room came the sound of the piano, and the pupils practicing *The Maiden's Prayer* and *The Dance of the Little Silver Bells*. Sometimes a girl's voice would float out, singing "The Garden of Sleep," or "The Blue Alsatian Mountains." While these went on, Auntie Lilian would lie on her sofa with her eyes closed, dabbing Eau de Cologne on her temples, and say that it was all killing her. Sometimes when he was in bed at night, he would hear their raised voices below, quarreling.

2

MR. CAWTHRA was a little man with a pointed beard and twinkling eyes. He was mild and jolly, and when he took Jim for walks they always had fun together. At first they used to go alone; later, Auntie Vi-Vi joined them. That was Jim's own name for her. Her real name was Violet Delcey. According to the books, his father met her in 1911,

and she came to live with them the next year. She was a cashier in the local department store, called the Bon Marché, and came to Mr. Cawthra for music lessons. She had a sweet mezzo-soprano voice, and Jim thought her singing of the Flower Song from *Faust* the most beautiful thing he had ever heard.

Here again, he was not sure what he remembered and what he had read. The books described her as a quiet, modest, gentle-spoken girl, with Titian hair; one of them, more flowery than the rest, said that she had the pale, grave face of a Madonna. Jim thought that he remembered a tip-tilted nose, which gave her face a saucy look. According to the story, she became his father's mistress, and Auntie Lilian made scenes of violent jealousy, weeping and threatening to kill herself. Jim could almost swear now that he had heard her do so. According to the story, too, Violet Delcey felt her position very keenly and tried to break off the relationship and leave the house. Mr. Cawthra's evidence was that they ceased to be lovers, but that he begged her to stay on because she was so good with the child.

Good with him? Had she been, Jim wondered? It seemed, as he looked back, that they were always having secrets — secrets from his father and Auntie Lilian; that they used to call at houses when they went for walks alone, and have tea with servants in the kitchen, and that sometimes there were young men present, and a lot of giggling went on; and then on the way home, Auntie Vi-Vi would take him to a tea-shop for a threepenny ice, and tell him not to say anything at home about where they had been. And there was Albert, too. Albert was a sailor.

But on the other hand he could remember her reading aloud to him from the storybooks, sitting in the big armchair while he balanced on her lap, her arm around his waist, her red hair tickling his face; and when he had earache she used to come and sit on his bed, and bring him salt-bags and sing to him until the pain left him and he went to sleep.

She wore a brooch, which she told him was a cat's-eye, and this frightened him because he thought of the stone as being a real eye, extracted from a cat's head and in some way petrified. Even her reassurances, when he confessed to this after a nightmare, failed to remove his fear of the brooch completely; it remained a sinister thing in his memory, even now. He could not recall her wearing any other ornament, and saw her always in his mind as very neatly dressed, in a white blouse and plain gray skirt, and a patent-leather belt at her waist. This was the Violet Delcey of recorded fact; how did the Auntie Vi-Vi of his memory square with her?

In the summer of 1912 Auntie Lilian was taken

ill — ill enough to have to stay in bed, this time. It was a hot summer, and Aunt Bet and Uncle Harvey were visiting them from America. They were relatives of Jim's own mother, childless, and they took to him at once. They stayed in a boarding-house just down the road, because the only spare room at home was the one in which Violet Delcey slept, and she was needed there to nurse and look after Auntie Lilian. Jim spent his days with them, and presently moved over to the boardinghouse altogether, because the house was upset with illness and he was in the way. After Jim had been with them a little while, Aunt Bet asked him how he would like to go back to America with them.

"We planned to adopt you almost as soon as we saw you," she told him, when she was giving him the whole history some years afterwards. "You were so like poor Gertrude, and such an unhappy-looking little boy. It wasn't any fit household for a child to be brought up in. We could see that, the minute we arrived, even though your Aunt Lilian was sick in bed, and Violet Delcey was taking care of her and keeping out of everybody's way. But I caught a couple of looks between her and your father that told me all I needed to know, so we spoke to him about it — about taking you back with us, I mean — and he didn't make any objection. Of course, at that time, we hadn't the least idea what was going to happen."

After a couple of weeks in London, his uncle and aunt went on a trip to Scotland, where Uncle Harvey's family had come from, two generations back. Jim went with them, and it was while they were away that Auntie Lilian died. They hurried back to London. Jim thought he could remember the funeral, and being given seedcake to eat, and Auntie Vi-Vi wearing black, with a large black hat that had a big pearl hatpin in it.

At any rate, it was two weeks later, so Aunt Bet told him, that they sailed for America, and after that there was the house in Rockford, Illinois, and school, and new playfellows; a new life and new interests. Everything was different. He missed his father sometimes, and when he asked for him, Aunt Bet said, "You're our boy now," and took him into the kitchen, where she gave him something to eat. One day she told him that his father was dead. He was surprised, and worked himself up into crying a little in bed that night. Then he forgot him.

3

IT WAS when he was fourteen that Aunt Bet told him the whole story. Uncle Harvey had died two

years before, and she herself was ill at the time. She must have known or guessed that she had not long to live. She sent for him to come to her room, on a sweltering summer afternoon and, sitting up in the double bed, pushing the streaks of her gray hair off her damp, red forehead, she told him as kindly as she could the facts of the Cawthra case.

"It's a dreadful thing I've got to tell you, Jim, and I've dreaded having to do it, ever since you came to live with us. But if I don't tell you, somebody else will, and not in a nice way, either."

He sat on his chair by her bedside, and fidgeted. He wanted to be out with the other boys, and not in here listening to her.

"Come up on the bed, Jim," she said, "and give me your hand."

He seated himself on the high bed, and put his hand unwillingly into hers, which was moist and work-scarred.

"It's about your father," she said, "and I don't know how to tell you now any better than I'd have done in the beginning, even though I've had seven years to think about it. Your father was hanged, Jim; he was hanged for murdering your Aunt Lilian; and that's all there is to it. And you'd better know it from me than from gossiping busybodies later on."

Father; Auntie Lilian; it was so long now since he had thought of them. Their names brought back another life: the dark house with the drawn shades, and the sound of the piano from the back room.

"It all happened that summer we were over there and brought you back with us. It's all dead and forgotten, and I hope you'll never think about it, any more than you can help or will have to. Uncle Harvey and I made you our own son from that time on, and gave you our name, for your poor mother's sake, and it hasn't anything to do with you, except that it did happen, and he was your father, God forgive him."

She was sparing with the details, telling him only that it was poison — some kind of weed-killer, she said. Jim, with a memory of the summer evenings when they used to spray the stunted rosebushes to destroy the green-fly, could not escape a childish picture of his father turning the syringe on Auntie Lilian, or forcing her to drink from the bucket into which the syringe was dipped.

"Why did he do it?" he asked. "Why did he want to kill her?"

"It was on account of that girl. Violet Delcey. He wanted to marry her."

Jim, who was by then beginning to be acquainted with the facts of sex, wondered whether his aunt was using a euphemism out of regard for his

supposed innocence. He blushed; this part of the story affected him more than any other.

After that, Aunt Bet refused to talk about it. He knew enough, she said. When she went to the hospital to have her operation the next year, she told Jim that if anything happened to her he would find the press clippings about his father in an envelope in a secret drawer in the bureau.

"You can read them or not, as you want," she said. "Your uncle and I kept them for when you were old enough to know about it all."

Nothing did happen to her then except to return from the hospital and linger another year in pain. But Jim read the clippings, all the same. She had hardly left the house before he did so, kneeling on one of the green plush chairs in the living room, with the faded sheets of newspaper spread on the table cover before him. He read them greedily and guiltily, as though they were a dirty book.

For weeks he was terrified — terrified at the memory of the little house, and of his picture of his father stealing out to the tool shed that he so clearly remembered, getting the weed-killer from the shelf, and mixing it with Auntie Lilian's medicine, carrying it up the narrow stairs to her room. Worse were the descriptions of Auntie Lilian's symptoms, the exhumation, and the post-mortem examination. They were appalling, but they fascinated him, and he gloated over the details in his room at night.

4

Now, it was all a tale so old and so familiar that it was like a book that he had read too many times. The story of the murder was simple enough. Auntie Lilian was taken ill in July, 1912. The doctor attended her, and diagnosed gastritis. He prescribed medicine, and within a couple of weeks she was better. It was during those weeks that Violet Delcey nursed her. When she was out of danger, Violet went on a holiday.

This, Jim figured, must have been about the time that he himself was in Scotland with his aunt and uncle. Mr. Cawthra and his wife were alone in the house with Annie. Auntie Lilian was up again, and spending her time on the sofa, taking a tonic that the doctor had ordered her three times a day. Mr. Cawthra used to pour it out for her. Suddenly, she had a relapse; the former symptoms returned, and in three days she was dead. The doctor gave a death certificate, and the funeral took place at Kensal Green, Violet Delcey returning from her holiday specially for it. It was clear she had nothing to do with the murder.

Two weeks after the funeral (which must, Jim reckoned, have been just after he himself left for America), she returned to the house to live, chaperoned now only by Annie. Auntie Lilian's friends were scandalized, and one of them, a Mrs. Pamphlett, paid a visit to the house to question Annie about what was going on. Finding Violet Delcey absent, she went on a tour of inspection and discovered that the girl had moved into the best bedroom, and that Mr. Cawthra was sleeping in the little room that she had occupied.

This, thought Mrs. Pamphlett, was outrageous, but what was worse was that across the bed, the marriage bed in which her poor friend had breathed her last, and in which her supplanter was now sleeping, was a lace bedspread that Auntie Lilian had finished making just before she died and had promised to Mrs. Pamphlett. She had a further conference with Annie, who had taken a dislike to Violet Delcey since she became mistress of the house. Encouraged, Annie now voiced dark suspicions; other friends joined in, and an exhumation order was applied for. Arsenic was found in large quantities in the body, and the police paid a visit to the house. They found the weed-killer in the tool shed, but they did not find Mr. Cawthra and Violet Delcey. They had fled.

They were discovered ten days later in Boulogne, living as father and daughter in a tiny *pension*, where they might have remained completely unsuspected, had not Violet Delcey had occasion to visit a dentist and objected to going to a French one. There was one English dentist in the town, and it happened that he had that day seen the police description in the London papers. It was the cat's-eye brooch which gave her away; the dentist recognized it and communicated with the police. Faced with them, Mr. Cawthra confessed his guilt immediately, but stated passionately that Violet Delcey knew nothing about it. After some trouble, they were extradited and brought home to stand their trials.

These were brief in the extreme. Mr. Cawthra persisted in his plea of guilty, all hope and interest seeming to have deserted him. "I did it," he said in his statement to the police, "and even if I hadn't, now that she knows I've been accused of it, there couldn't be any possibility of happiness for us. She's all I care about in life." The rest of the statement was concerned with establishing her innocence. It was the only thought he had left. Her trial as an accessory followed his by a couple of days, and she was acquitted without witnesses being called. Three weeks later he was hanged at Pentonville.

It was Mr. Cawthra's single-mindedness and his

solicitude for her that appealed to the public imagination, turning him almost into a hero and a martyr, and giving to what would otherwise have been a sordid and commonplace story of wife-poisoning an enduring quality of tragedy and romance. It was this angle, too, that attracted the dramatist and the novelists who fictionized it; all three told the same essential story, with the same central characters: the nagging, fretful, or shrewish wife; the mild, agreeable little husband who murdered her from motives of respectability, so that he could marry the other woman whom he loved with a tenderness and an intensity that flooded the drab suburban background like a radiance; and the girl herself, meek, shrinking, and refined, inspiring by her gentleness and her devotion a depth of passion that she could never have dreamed of, dragged by it into the tragic whirlpool of the flight and the trial.

The story and its interpretation were so familiar to Jim now that, like the public at large, he accepted them without question. All that bothered him was the puzzle of how to resolve the inconsistency of the two figures — the Violet Delcey of fact and fiction, and the gay, mysterious Auntie Vi-Vi of his recollections. He would have liked to be able to assure himself that those recollections were untrustworthy; in his heart, he knew that they were not.

But in any case, it was all so long ago. So much had happened since then, to him as well as to the world. He was married to a wife who knew nothing of the case or his connection with it; he had a house, and a job, and the future to worry about; what did the dead remote past matter? It mattered only to the playwrights and the novelists, and to the compilers of books on criminology; to himself, it was hardly more, now, than would have been a mystery story he had read in his childhood and left without reaching the solution, in a volume long since lost and out of print.

5

AND then one afternoon he saw her. It was in a department store in St. Louis, which he was visiting on business. She was standing at a counter a few feet away from him, and at the first glance he was certain that it was she. She had aged, changed, and filled out, and her Titian hair had faded to a pale ginger, but the tilt of her nose, the discontented, down-drawn line of her mouth, and the flat, level setting of her eyes in her face took him back suddenly across the years to his little room in the house in Kilburn, where she used to come and sit on his narrow bed and sing to him.

The next moment, doubt assailed him. Was it really she? How could he be sure? He could not possibly remember, after all this time. He stared at her, and his doubt grew. He was crazy to think of it; it was ridiculous to suppose that he would know her any more. And then, as he was about to abandon the idea, she turned towards him, and he saw that she was wearing a cat's-eye brooch, the brooch that used to frighten him in childhood.

Jim felt as though his heart had stopped for a moment; then it began to beat violently, choking him in his throat. She had passed him by, now, and was making for the street. In a moment she would be lost to him. He hurried after her, leaving his order uncompleted at the counter. As he went, he tried to think how he should greet her. If he said: "Aren't you Violet Delcey?" she would be certain to deny it.

He came abreast with her at the entrance to the store, and, as she was about to pass him, he said casually — as casually as he could for the excitement that was throttling him: "Hello, Auntie Vi-Vi!"

She started violently, and looked around to see who had spoken. He was smiling at her, with a nerve twitching uncontrollably at the corner of his mouth.

"Were you speaking to me?" she asked.

The moment she spoke, he knew her voice, English, and pseudo-refined, with impure vowel sounds. He had not heard a voice like that for years.

"Yes. Don't you remember me?" he said.

She looked at him for a moment and then dropped her eyes, assuming the indignation of a woman who is being accosted.

"No, I don't," she answered, and started to move on.

He caught at her arm.

"It's Jim — Jim Cawthra," he said, speaking the name he had not borne for nearly thirty years.

And now she turned to him again, her eyes widening, and her mouth falling open in surprise.

"Jim!" she breathed in amazement. "Not little Jim?"

"That's me," he said.

He could see that she was trembling as she tried to laugh and to treat the situation as a social coincidence.

"Well!" she said, but her voice was shaking, too.

"Can't we go somewhere and talk?" he asked, urgently. "I want to talk to you."

They went to a place near the store, choosing it because it was dark and empty, and seated themselves in a far corner. Violet Delcey ordered a banana split. She had put on a good deal of weight in the years; she was plump now, and matronly, and her face had lost the delicate contours that he

remembered. It was the face of a resentful, self-indulgent woman.

"How did you recognize me?" she asked. "You were only a little boy when I last saw you. I've changed, too. How did you know me?"

"By that." He pointed to the brooch.

She squinted down at it.

"Oh, that!" she said. "Well, fancy your remembering that!"

"It used to scare me, don't you remember? I used to think it was a real cat's eye."

"Did you?" she said. "How silly! I don't know why I still wear it. It isn't very pretty. Habit, I suppose. It's sort of silly, too, seeing it was that that really gave the show away before."

She gave a little laugh, and he stared at her. This could not be Violet Delcey speaking. But it could be Auntie Vi-Vi; he remembered that laugh: it recalled to him the afternoons in other people's kitchens, and the giggling conversations with the servants.

"Do you live here in St. Louis?" he asked.

She shook her head. "I'm not telling," she said. "I'm not telling you anything about me now."

"I wouldn't give you away."

"Well, that's as may be," she said, and the phrase struck him as odd and old-fashioned. "But I'm not taking any chances. What I was, or used to be, is all over, and no one knows about it. I wouldn't have come here with you now, except that — well, you're different. You were only a kid, and it's nice to get a chance to talk about old times, just for once."

"Do you think about it — much?" he asked. It was something he had long wondered about.

Again she shook her head.

"Not really," she said. "No. Now and then, of course, I suppose you can't help it, but it doesn't do you any good."

6

SHE took a spoonful of whipped cream. He could not think of what to ask her, what to say next. What did he want to know? "Was it awful?" That was really what he wanted to say, but it sounded such a silly question. Besides, what could she answer? Yes or no — neither would take him any further. He wanted to know what it had meant to her — what it felt like to have lived through all that she had lived through and to have come out on the other side, as she had done; but he could think of no way of putting the question so that she would understand it.

"Will you tell me about it?" he asked, at length. It was the best he could do.

"What? What do you want to know?"

He could not say. He thrust for a question of fact, rather than of point of view.

"Did you ever suspect what he had done? He never *told* you, did he?"

"No, of course he didn't. He didn't want me to know. That was the whole point. He knew I wouldn't have anything to do with him if I did."

"But when you were looking after her — the first time she was sick? He'd already started then, hadn't he?"

"Oh, that was only to make her ill enough to have the doctor in. For the sake of the death certificate the next time, you know. At least, that's how I figured it out afterwards. I suppose there was weed-killer in the medicine he used to pour out and give me to take up to her. But he always used to pour it out himself, and never let me do it. Just so that I couldn't be mixed up in it, I expect. He was always very thoughtful of me."

"Did you love him?" The questions were beginning to come of their own accord now.

Violet Delcey stared at him.

"Love him?" she repeated, incredulously. "How could I have loved him? He was old enough to be my father. But he was always respectful to me. And kind. You wouldn't believe how kind he was. Of course, he was crazy about me."

"But you *were* his mistress, weren't you?"

She looked offended. "Mistress? I don't know what you mean," she said.

There was no point in pursuing that.

"When you went away together — when you ran away — what did you think?" he asked. "He didn't tell you then what was wrong?"

"No. Of course, I knew there was trouble. I caught that Mrs. What's-her-name in the kitchen one day, talking to the skivvy. That girl had always hated me, and taken Mrs. Cawthra's side against me, and I guessed that she'd been saying things, so it wasn't any surprise to me when Freddie came and said there was a lot of gossip going on, and that it would be a good idea if we were to go away for a while till it had blown over. He said we could get married on the Continent. We were *going* to get married, you know," she went on. "I wouldn't have had anything to do with him in the first place if we hadn't been. Right from the beginning, he said he wanted to marry me, and that he would, as soon as *she* died. She was always being ill, you know, and I think he sort of hoped from the beginning that she wouldn't last. I suppose he got tired of waiting, same as I did."

"What — what do you mean?" Jim stammered.

"Well, wouldn't *you* have? I told him that I

wasn't going to put up with it any longer. I mean, I wasn't getting any younger, and I wasn't going to spend the rest of my life just waiting for her to die."

"And what did *he* say?"

"Oh, he cried," she said, lightly. "Said he couldn't live without me, and if I'd only give him a little time, he'd see if he couldn't do something about a divorce, or something. So I said I'd give him three months, and after that I'd have to give Mr. Joplin his answer."

"Mr. Joplin?"

"Yes, don't you remember Joplin's, the paper shop? Old Joplin had been after me for ages."

7

A FORGOTTEN cupboard opened in Jim's memory. He saw a tall, stooping figure with thin streaks of hair plastered on a shiny scalp, steel-rimmed spectacles, and a prominent Adam's apple, giving him the pink, paper "Books for the Bairns" in exchange for his weekly penny. Old Joplin; he hadn't thought of him for years.

"Were you going to marry *him*?" he asked.

"Well, I might have. He had a nice little business, and he was crazy about me, and I wasn't getting any younger. That's what I told Freddie, and he saw my point."

"When was that?"

"Oh, about a month before she was taken queer."

It was odd to hear the old expressions again.

"It wasn't till we were in France that I really began to put two and two together, but by that time there wasn't anything I could do. Of course, I knew there was nothing against me, but it did look bad. I was scared to death of the trial, because you never know how they can twist things, those lawyers, but *he* saw to it that it was all right. I knew he would, of course. I knew that I could trust him. He was always the gentleman, your father was."

She looked at her watch.

"Here, I've got to go," she said.

"Not yet," Jim pleaded.

"I must." She began gathering up her things.

"Tell me just one thing more," he asked.

"What?"

"Who was Albert?" That memory had to be cleared up.

She looked at him blankly.

"Albert?" she repeated. "I don't remember any Albert."

"He was a sailor."

Recognition came into her face.

"Oh, Albert," she said, laughing. "Fancy you

remembering him. Yes. Albert — what *was* his other name? I've forgotten."

"Who was he?"

"He was a friend of mine. He treated me very badly, Albert did. That was the time I first started going to Freddie for singing lessons. I was having trouble with Albert, and I remember one day when I had a headache, it all sort of got too much for me, and I began crying, and Freddie tried to comfort me. That's how it all started, really. I mean, he sort of asked me questions, and I told him all about it, and that's what really started him getting keen on me, I think. Funny, I'd forgotten all about Albert."

"But you went on seeing him. I remember meeting you with him, and your telling me not to say anything about it at home."

"Well, I didn't want to upset Freddie, when he was being so kind to me," she said. "I was supposed to have been all through with Albert, and I didn't want to worry Freddie, knowing that I wasn't. I remember wondering whether I'd hear from Albert when the trouble came, but of course I didn't. He was a bad lot, really, but he was very good-looking, and he had a way with him. I wonder what's become of him."

A thought seemed to strike her suddenly, and she smiled, looking down at the cat's-eye brooch.

"What is it?" Jim asked. "Have you thought of something?"

"I've just remembered," she said. "It was Albert gave me this brooch. Funny, my forgetting that!"

She fingered the brooch, and then unpinned it, taking it out and looking at it as though she had not seen it for a long time. It was a meager little thing, Jim thought; queer that it should have seemed sinister to him all these years.

"Yes," she said, as she replaced it. "He said it was good luck, or something. Well, I dare say it has been. I've been lucky. Did I tell you I was married, by the way?"

"No," said Jim.

"Oh, yes, I've been married nearly twenty years," she said. "He really does very well. We're getting one of the new Plymouths next month. I haven't done badly for myself. There is just one drawback, though, to no one knowing who I am."

"What's that?" Jim Cawthra asked.

"Well," she said, a smug and almost coy look coming into her face. "You see, they don't know, and looking at me now, no one would believe that I was once good enough for a man to commit a murder and get himself hung for me. But," she sighed philosophically, "I suppose you can't have everything."

TWENTYNINE PALMS

by MURIEL VAN TUYL TRIGG

1

IT WAS dark in the Mojave Desert when my husband and I bumped over forty miles of liver-stirring roads and deposited our camp equipment at the oasis of Twentynine Palms. We filled our buckets at the spring under the palms and cottonwoods and filled our lungs with the pure, dry air. We were on a short outing, taken by perverse choice in January instead of June, and on this first trip into the desert we were seeking only peace and the perspective of space. All night we listened at wakeful intervals to mysterious marauders who came to the spring to drink and paused long enough to sniff at the human beings who might prove foe or friend.

The dawn revealed to us an artist's paradise, and when I was able to bring my attention back from heaven to earth, there it was: a road not fifty feet from our camp, just two faint tracks really, snaking away among the sagebrush toward hills four or five miles to the northwest.

Unmarked roads have always been my undoing. After breakfast we set out on foot. The road led us through a maze of fragrant sagebrush and greasewood, through deep sandy washes where the smoke trees were tall enough to play hide-and-seek with the view. The road changed direction so subtly that we would look up from the path — which we watched for the huge holes of rabbits and turtles, so cleverly camouflaged that a careless walker might break a leg — to find an entirely new arrangement of dunes, hills, and background of mountains.

When we reached the foot of the hill we were to climb, we realized that distance had dwarfed it and it was a good 500-foot rise. Cloudbursts had

washed gullies to the dignity of small canyons, and we found moonstones and rocks of exquisite coloring. Dried cow dung and an old stone skin-scraper set us to wondering about the Indians and the herds of wild cattle once living here.

We followed the rise up the wash, fascinated by the large dike which cut diagonally through the hills. We paused on a promontory to take the sweaters from our shoulders and tie them around our waists — and there, looking back, we saw the treasure. Through the V of two overlapping hills was the concentrated view of the "Twenty-nine Palms." Not even "Government Surveyor Washington" who named them could have been more surprised and pleased than we were as we feasted our eyes on the beauty of the scene and the promise it held of cool water and shade when we should return in the afternoon.

But we were not yet at the top, and were unprepared for the sensation we experienced when we reached it and stood high and free, startled by the transition from possible human contacts to absolute privacy. No sound reached us from the habitations scattered over acres and acres and acres of sand, and seen as isolated dots. No movement interrupted our clear vision of a panorama I shall never forget. On one side lay the Pintos, and Gorgonia raised a snow-white head sixty miles away. The Bullions lay due north, splashed with shadows; and beyond them, the Sheepholes.

Wallace, too, was absorbed in abstraction. What message he was gaining from the pressure of silence I didn't find out, for he turned to me and said, "Let's eat."

Actually, he shared my enthusiasm, and before the end of our vacation we determined to rent our home in Pasadena, turn our languishing business over to a partner, and settle on our hilltop. We bought a "relinquishment" so that we might file a claim on a 160-acre homestead, and within a year we had stepped out on a desert adventure which today

At the low point of the depression, MURIEL VAN TUYL TRIGG, then in her thirty-fifth year, and her husband Wallace, who was forty-four, pulled out of Pasadena, where Mr. Trigg had been practicing as a landscape engineer, and headed for the open spaces of the California desert. At the tiny oasis of Twentynine Palms, battling against the heat, the sandstorms, and the manifold problems of inexperience, this couple built for themselves an adobe refuge which is now the envy of their city-bound friends. Here is how they did it.

is evidenced by our guest ranch, Singing Sands. Its three houses are built of adobe brick, and we built them.

2

It was my idea that it would be romantic to make our own adobe brick and build every bit of our house by hand, ourselves. After all, we didn't possess a cement mixer and didn't feel justified in investing in one. Back in Pasadena, while Wallace studied such practical things as sewer pipe and bulletins on "How to Build a House," "How to Make a Fireplace," I was visiting every adobe house built by the Spaniards within a radius of twenty miles. The historic old Adobe Flores building where California had been signed over to the Americanos was the most inspiring. I'm sure that Mrs. Noyes, who was at one time its owner, won't mind my relating a bit of our conversation.

"What do *you* know about making adobe brick?" she asked Wallace and me. "I wouldn't have any but Mexican-made brick myself. Are you intending to mix manure with yours?"

We admitted we had intended to use straw.

"Well," she said, "the Mexicans, who really know how to make brick, always use manure with theirs."

I could hardly wait until we were outside to ask Wallace why he had looked as if he would explode when she said that. "Because, my dear," he explained, "she apparently didn't know *why* the Mexicans use manure in their brick mixture. I didn't have the heart to tell her the Mexicans are too lazy to cut up the straw themselves, so they let the donkeys do it."

At the risk of getting ahead of my story, let me assume that you don't know any more about making brick than we did. Here is how we began. First, we made a wooden form. Not to be outdone by the Mexicans, and being at that time as ignorant as the donkeys they employ, we decided on the backbreaking, standard-sized brick. We consequently built our forms twelve by eighteen by four inches. These forms must be soaked, and when thoroughly wet they are filled with the mixture of clay (adobe), straw, and sand. Just as children make mud pies by filling various containers with wet mud and then carefully lifting the containers from the mud, which retains its contours, so we filled each wooden form with mud, being careful to pack the corners well. Then, while it was still wet, we slowly (and prayerfully) lifted the form from the mud, leaving a perfect brick lying on sand which had been leveled.

Sand makes a splendid place on which to form the

bricks, for it helps suck the moisture out of them. This process is called "curing." For several days the bricks are left to dry until they become hard enough to handle without breaking. Then they turn quite gray and crack, because of the release of the salt content and the contraction of the clay. After that they are turned up on their sides, where they stand until the cracks disappear again and they resume their mud color. Next they must all be scraped to remove any loose sand which has clung to the bottom or sides, and when that has been done they are ready to stack.

At this point the amateur learns that each eighteen-inch brick weighs sixty pounds! A twelve-inch brick would have been twenty pounds lighter to carry. By cutting off one third of the length, the weight is proportionally reduced. I can see Wallace's tired back arch when he reads this, but he knows how much the beauty of line of the longer brick means to me; and even had we known ahead of time that the smaller ones would have been so much easier to handle, I doubt if he would have spared himself. I have never known anyone who could grumble so much about someone's unreasonable demands and then, having won his release, deliberately fulfill them! For months he drove himself mercilessly, regardless of such wind as only the desert has, such cold as only one winter in twenty on the California desert brings, pulling with a hoe a load that wears out cement mixers — for adobe mud is heavier and has more suction than cement. Each day he lifted more than a hundred bricks weighing sixty pounds apiece — stacking, lifting, placing them often with his eyes closed against wind and blowing sand.

In stacking, the bricks are piled on top of each other and on edge, in stacks three to four bricks high, and left to cure until they ring like a good cement tile when tapped. It depends entirely upon the climate and weather conditions of the place in which they are made how long this takes. We have had bricks made in the spring cure perfectly in one month, while those made in winter took several months. Always you must keep them away from moisture until they are baked by the sun through and through. The desert is a better place than many, but its moods are not always predictable, and cloudbursts occasionally blow up from nowhere without warning. A neighbor of ours had two thousand newly made bricks still flat on the ground when an unexpected shower ruined the entire batch.

But before we could even make the bricks or build our house, we had to file our claim. We found to our dismay that our claim obliged us to take occupancy of the 160 acres during August. Wallace left

Sonny and me behind in the relative cool of the city and went forth to write our names in the sand. In his letters he wrote that the tent he put up was too hot to use, that the temperature rose to 124°, and that the drinking water he had bottled turned so hot that he could not down it. He wrote that he worked in the early morning and in the cool of the evening, but that he had to lie flat in the car, all windows open, from ten in the morning to four in the afternoon. Things, he said, would be better when we arrived in the fall.

3

AM I going to be big enough to meet these new demands?" I asked myself on our way out to our homestead. There I found the eight-by-twelve shack which, battling against unbelievable odds, Wallace had built. There were no screens on the two windows, and as I entered I did not think there was room for me and the flies too. Under one window was a wardrobe trunk. There was an ancient kitchen table which Wallace had picked up at a secondhand store, a three-burner kerosene stove, two straight chairs, and a box — and that was all! No curtains, no comfort, no room. Somehow I managed to get together a fairly creditable meal, and after it Wallace helped me with the dishes — no running water, no sink, of course; just two filled pans on the stove, one for washing and one for rinsing.

Did I say there was no room? We stepped from the shack onto the eight-by-ten porch and right into the welcoming arms of a desert evening. Space — quiet — peace. Fresh, clean air forced the chin up and the chest out. The Star of Bethlehem shone no brighter than the one which hung low over our shack that night. This acreage, four city blocks square, was to be ours if we lived on it and improved it by building on it! I looked at my boy and I was genuinely glad that he was to have the experience of earning the land which was now to become his home, and of taking an active part in making from that land the bricks with which he and his father were to build a house.

Breakfast was a bit gritty, but satisfying, and soon my son was standing on top of the hill looking with shaded eyes for the tiny black spot which would finally take on the proportions of a pickup truck belonging to a "neighbor" many miles beyond. The lively load of yelling youngsters would stop to add my lusty offspring to the school transportation. The county allowed each homesteader so much a mile for this privilege, and for the ac-

cumulated amount the farthest citizen had agreed to make the trip in for mail and groceries and to furnish transportation. The pupils walked home through the sand, finding ever new interests in snakes, lizards, and *Dipodomys* on their winding routes.

After Wally had left, Wallace and I gathered up surveying chains and equipment and started out to establish the corners of our land. The government had placed cement markers, two of which had not been located for some time, and we were eager to find them. I must have been a constant irritation to Wallace, who, from his site a block away, would patiently give me signals to move a hair right or left, and then wait for me to drag my eyes away from the horizon of my new possession.

By noon I was thoroughly weary, and the enthusiasm of the morning seemed a thing apart. *If* we had the money to put down a well, and *if* we had some trees, and *if* we could just start building a house without leveling a hill with shovels and a wheelbarrow, and *if* we didn't have to spend days going after rocks and picking up two at a time and lugging them in the trailer to fill the great ditches necessary to assure a firm foundation for the weight of adobe brick which must be safely supported, I should feel more confident of my helpfulness through it all.

By the time the sun had set in its customary glory and I was faced with the problem of preparing a substantial and attractive meal for two hungry male dependents, I had developed a splitting headache. Whether my unaccustomed eyes couldn't take the glare of the undiverted light reflected from sky and sand, or whether my city contacts with wind had been more protected, or whether my effort to keep food by wrapping it with wet cloths and letting the action of evaporation be my refrigerator had failed, or whether I had drunk too much of the odd-tasting water from the desert bag, I don't know; but I do know that when I crawled into bed that night, I realized I couldn't keep my churning stomach a secret from my family much longer.

Fortunately they were both asleep by the time the butterflies left my stomach and rose to my throat. I finally slipped out of bed and realized in panic that I was afraid to go through the pitch-black night to reach the outhouse; so grabbing the shovel parked near the bed, I paced a few feet and hurriedly dug the hole which was to conceal my sickness.

4

THE first week was busy and profitable. Wallace and I had agreed on a site about a third of the way

up our hill on the east ridge, and he had made a road to it by putting burlap under the car wheels and then following them up with adobe which he hauled in his homemade trailer from the dry lake six miles north. By deflating our tire pressure and going very slowly, never spinning the wheels, we usually managed to keep from getting stuck in the sand.

Wallace had made five test bricks of varying "richnesses" of mixture and had found a good gravel pocket not too far from the proposed house. We had run levels and established the foundation ditches and forms. I had changed the original plans I had drawn in Pasadena now that the location, chosen for wind protection, offered views where previously I had not planned windows. I had specified a fifteen-by-twenty bedroom with a vast fireplace which I saw as a thing of beauty and Wallace saw as a headache. I had also come to realize what a part the winter sun was to play in patio comfort. The living room must have a four-by-five window framing the snowcapped Gorgonia, and the corner hearth must be where it would be the first note of welcome as one opened the front door. The covered loggia must face east or the west wind would make it uncomfortable a good many months of the year. Above all, our house must be livable.

Since the shack was to be our home for many months, it did not seem a waste of time to make even so temporary a camp as attractive as possible. I put up gay little curtains, set candles in pewter saucers, and opened out the wardrobe trunk so that the pretty flowered covers of the drawers would add jollity. Our good neighbor a mile away stopped in often. "You'd never know it was the same place!" he'd say.

As soon as he had a few hundred bricks curing, Wallace had promised to build a lean-to to protect our beds, which now were entirely out in the open. Vacation camping is one thing, but permanent winter residence is quite different. It had become alarmingly cold at night, and we watched the thermometer carefully before going to bed, draining the car whenever Wallace thought it necessary. We were to learn that our hill is normally safe from freezing because our height and hill protection give us an average of eight degrees warmer in winter and cooler in summer than the desert flatlands. But that first winter, as though to test our endurance, was the coldest in twenty years. Our hastily built camp shack had no foundation, for it was our intention to tear it down in six months; but although it waved with the wind many a time, we were always cozy and warm inside.

We still slept outside — and each night with the

inescapableness of death there came that awful moment when we rushed forth in bedsocks and sleeping hoods and robes, to lie with chattering teeth and shaking limbs until we manufactured enough body heat to warm our frigid beds. We even warmed stones and flatirons and wrapped them in newspaper as bed warmers. But once the chill left, even the wind tearing at our caps didn't keep us from that good sleep with which healthy outdoor work and pure, dry air always rewarded us. And the night smells and sounds of the desert and the intimacy with stars still make our hearts cry out, "Oh, this is good!"

But there came a night when I awakened to feel what I thought at first must be rain on my face. When my eyes became accustomed to the night, I woke Wallace.

"Wally, it's snowing!"

He awakened enough to pull up the tarpaulin and then went back to sleep, but I was too excited for that and I lay there straining my eyes to watch the soft flakes. Having lived twenty years in Chicago, I was to experience my first sleeping out in the snow on the desert of California!

In the morning I opened my eyes to have them automatically close again. Nor could I open them and keep them open for more than a few seconds. Without a building or a single tree or anything high enough to cast a shadow for relief, the sun scattered snow diamonds lavishly over hundreds of acres, dazzling me to blindness. I couldn't stay outside and be comfortable, even with dark glasses. By noon I had a headache. But what a sight it was! Pure white as far as the eye could see, and the mountains unearthly in their beauty. An entire valley made holy overnight. The sunset turned the peaks into pearls, and when the moon rose in her full dignity we witnessed another world. Red Mars became a ruby on the clear throat of the sky. The Dance of the Snow Fairies was all about us and we were bewitched.

We felt snug even when that storm closed the pass and completely isolated our valley. The bread truck couldn't get through, so we enjoyed an excess of corn bread and biscuits from our little portable oven. The cold lasted long enough for the water pipes to freeze and burst all over the valley. Our pipes stayed intact, although we had to wind parts of them with burlap soaked in kerosene and set fire to it to thaw them before the water would run. We hauled our water (as we still do), but Wallace had put up a tank and run his pipes underground and downhill, so we had good pressure. (The tank which supplied us then looks tiny beside the 2000-gallon storage tank which now supplies our three houses.)

5

I CAN see now, in the light of later learning, why, as I flitted about, that first year, between stakes which designated where rooms were to be eventually, chattering, "Now we'll have a corner fireplace here, a Mexican one in the dining room, and one with raised hearth in the bedroom," my patient husband followed me in body, but not in spirit. While I had been drawing plans wholesale, Wallace had been studying bulletins from the experiment stations and government bureaus on "How to Build a Fireplace."

"Oh, we will, will we?" he answered in that particularly deadly quiet tone he uses when he is about to pull me off my rainbow and make me put on my rubbers.

"But, Wally, a home is built for comfort and coziness and contentment, and a fireplace in each room adds so much."

"It also subtracts about ten years from my life. Honestly, Peg, sometimes I believe you lie awake nights thinking of things for me to do."

"But *why*? Surely there isn't any very great overdraft on your time just to build a simple fireplace. After all, it's just a hole with a chimney."

In silent scorn he handed me a bulletin.

"Study that before you talk on a subject you know nothing about."

Know nothing about! Why, I'd lived so intimately with fireplaces all my life that I knew them upside down!

But in all fairness I focused my mind on the bulletin in my hand. There *did* seem to be more to this building game than first met the eye. I humbly followed the arrows indicating air currents through a maze of smokeboxes and mathematically proportioned secret chambers designed to fool the downpouring cold air and rain into traps where they would be caught by the rising smoke. So *that* is why heat comes into the room instead of escaping up the chimney: a sloping back and a narrow throat.

"Well — we have to build one fireplace at a time anyway," I remarked as I handed back the regulations, "so what are we waiting for?"

Within a week we had two caustic discussions, one involving the homemade "heatilator" which Wallace was determined to have to conserve heat, and which I was equally determined *not* to have if it would spoil the beauty of my fireplace design; and the other a lollapalooza about that very design, which Wallace said would be impossible to build

safely, since my curved surfaces didn't give him room to put in his supporting iron which was to carry the weight of an adobe chimney.

The first argument ended in a charming compromise in which I think I won. At least I got my raised hearth of natural stone which conceals the heatilator that *he* got. The second debate went on for days, but finally was decided in favor of a smaller chimney, less scrap iron (*we* were the only ones at war at that time), and modified curves. We were still on speaking terms when we rounded the first one together. I was doing the "follow-up" work known as pointing. After each brick had been settled on its bed of mud and squared three ways, I would scrape the excess mud off the joints and smooth or "point" with a special trowel.

I have a supersensitive skin and was developing a swelling of the hands and a maddening itch from my daily contact with the adobe and sand. That, plus the fact that disagreeing with Wallace always upsets me, had put my nerves too close to the surface. The night the pet trowel was missing and he accused me of carelessly disposing of it, we both jumped at the little trowel as an excuse to say all the things which let off steam. A shower bath and supper softened our shells of silence, and the desert moon heard us apologize to each other before we fell asleep. But the damage had been done, and the next day only Sonny sang as he cast some small firebrick, mixed with ashes, for the back of the opening.

Some years later, when we were sitting on the hearth one evening, Wallace, scrutinizing his handiwork, suddenly assumed an attitude of attention.

"A penny for your thoughts," I coaxed.

His eyes, which had been riveted on a rough area of cement underneath the fireplace hood, began to twinkle. He ran his finger along a sharp ridge before he said with a mock bow, "I apologize, Mrs. Trigg, for I have found the trowel." There it was, imbedded in the cement of the hood. Wallace must have pushed it off while setting a brick in position, and it had lodged at the bottom of a form, where it had been covered with mortar. When the form was pulled, the unmistakable trowel edge betrayed its hiding place, but we hadn't happened to look up underneath until then.

If the next war wipes us all out, the beings who will inherit the earth may stumble upon our adobe some day and the little trowel may start another argument — this time as to whether we built our houses with it, or ate with it, or planted it so that we should have something to build with in heaven.

(To be continued)

IRISH LITERATURE TODAY

by JOHN V. KELLEHER

I

Now that Yeats is dead six years and Æ nine, we can perhaps turn to Irish literature for an appraisal of its post-Revolutionary phase. Those two men, already grown to fame before the Revolution, so dominated the scene after it that all the younger men were obscured by them, and new work which was full of ability was made to seem trivial and immature in comparison with theirs. One cannot say they led the new generation; the difference of intent between their poetic fantasy and the younger men's prose realism was too wide for that; they did, by their presence, by their founders' authority, hinder the rise of new leaders.

Yeats and Æ were the grand old men of Irish literature: its pioneers, as no one else is likely ever to be. As they had had no serious competitors when young, so when old they had the preponderance of fame and experience on their side. An O'Flaherty or an O'Faoláin might gain much by the work they had already accomplished; he could never have the naked freedom they had enjoyed. There can be many generations of explorers and many of settlers: there is only one of pioneers; and Irish literature is now a settled region. It is time to see how the settlers are making out.

The latest reports are bad. Indeed it has been a long while since there has been a cheerful one. Seán O'Faoláin, the most important Irish author living in Ireland, ended one of his editorials in the *Bell* with these words: "The picture is tragic, but we must paint what we see. Yeats, Moore, Joyce, Shan Bullock, MacKenna, Gregory, Æ, Higgins have all gone. No young men are appearing. If our leaders of opinion do not act quickly Irish literature will virtually cease to exist within ten years."

And Frank O'Connor, writing in *Horizon* on "The Future of Irish Literature," confessed that

he was unable to see any future for it. "Theoretically, of course, it is possible for a writer to live in a country where his books are banned, where there are no magazines to print his work, where all power is in the hands of a fanatical and corrupt middle-class, and never, never emerge from his ivory tower. But like Whitman when he saw the oak tree growing alone, 'I know I could not do it.'"

Such pessimism coming from these two men cannot be shrugged off. O'Faoláin is one of the few Irish writers who have deliberately chosen to stay and fight it out in Ireland, though he might have found likelier rewards in almost any other direction. O'Connor has fought hard against much pressure to keep a secure foothold in Irish life. They have then the right to speak. They have won it many times over. If Irish literature can be said to have leaders, they and the poet Austin Clarke are its leaders.

Of course the objection can immediately be raised that there are other and more famous living Irish authors than these. There are, but not in Ireland. The names O'Faoláin listed in the *Bell* editorial are of those Irish writers who have died in the last fifteen years. He might have added another list as impressive: the names of the writers who have left Ireland, apparently for good. We should then have Liam O'Flaherty, Sean O'Casey, James Stephens, Oliver St. John Gogarty, Padraic Colum, Denis Johnston, and, if you wish, Francis Stuart, who chose Berlin. Even of the first list, Joyce, MacKenna, and Æ died in voluntary exile. And Moore's connection with Irish literature was too brief and indeterminate to establish him securely as an Irish author; he belongs rather with Shaw and Wilde, Irish literary adventurers in England. When we are discussing the literature of a country not ravaged by war, we must look first to the books written within the country. The international writers do not yet reproduce themselves.

The first difficulty the student of current Irish

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literature encounters is lack of evidence. It is hard to make sound generalizations on scanty facts, and in a literature where the books come in single spies at longer and longer intervals it is very hard to name general tendencies, except the obvious tendency toward extinction. There is no longer a main stream of Irish literature. There are drops of it. As far as I can see, the output of good literary writing in the last three years, aside from the poems and stories appearing in the *Bell* and the *Dublin Magazine*, consisted of four volumes of biography, three of autobiography, two novels, two books of short stories, a few plays, a few slim books of verse, and a traveler's sketchbook.

Not much for three years; and actually the distribution dwindles sharply toward the present. There need be no complaint of the quality of this writing. It was generally good — and in several cases excellent, as in O'Faoláin's *Great O'Neill* and O'Casey's *Pictures in the Hallway*. But a certain indefinable minimum of quantity is required to create or preserve a literature. In the best days Irish literature ever saw, it was not far above that minimum. Today it is definitely below it. Five or six books a year are not enough, especially when the incidence of biography and reminiscence is so high.

2

THAT incidence, however, is not simply, as one might guess, a symptom of waning energies and fading purpose. Rather it indicates the recognition of a new set of problems to which Irish artists must face up if their work is to keep its substance. And that substance is not so easy to come by as before. Certainly one of the reasons for the quick general success of the Celtic Revival was the richness of its resources. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, folklorists, Gaelic scholars and translators, had uncovered a rich mine of prefashioned material for literature: the Gaelic legends and cycles, the colorful half-mythical history of ancient Ireland, an abundance of poetry, and the peasant myths and folk tales that served as a living bridge to that remote world. All this the Revival exploited until artists and audiences alike were surfeited with fairyland.

Then came the Revolution with its own compelling romance and legend acted out in daily drama. And as the Revolution broke down into civil war in 1922 and 1923, rage and disappointment created new passion that burst into words in O'Flaherty's novels and O'Casey's plays; and post-Revolutionary disillusionment in Ireland found

ready understanding in the disillusioned post-war world. Thus for forty years the Irish artist very seldom had to think of what to write about. He had only to reach out and take all he could use from the common stock.

Today the situation is different. He writes of a diminished reality. His Ireland is a little country in the butter and beef business. And if he is to make his material interesting, he must study it and think about it a great deal and then sustain his interpretation of it with a durable style. It is no wonder that the number of Irish artists has fallen off so sharply, or that so many of those left are historians. Pioneers are hell on resources.

That is one reason for their concern with history, but not the only one. In so far as there is any large public for Irish literature it is a public with a decided taste for the romantic and the Celtic, however spurious. Twenty years ago Donn Byrne readily outsold O'Flaherty and O'Casey. Nowadays the only Irish author whom publishers would consider a success is Maurice Walsh, who spreads on his Celtic romance — impartially Scotch or Irish, ancient or modern — with a shovel. O'Faoláin, on the other hand, maintains a moderate prosperity only by working tirelessly as editor, reviewer, critic, and literary news-gatherer, at the same time that he is turning out his important novels and biographies.

The others we would link with him are not well-off. They are not, then, realists and students of history for profit. Their motives are artistic; their resolution, moral. They are trying to give Ireland a literature wholly expressive of itself as it is today, in the belief that good health begins with candid self-recognition. And because most of them cannot see in standard romanticized Irish history any living roots of the country they know, they are trying to discover the history that actually did produce the small familiar democracy.

What they have found is, for most, not a long history. It begins in the dark chaos of the eighteenth century and traces, for a century and a half, the rise of the people toward a share in what the world presently offers of political and economic freedom. If they look farther back than that, they see only the crumbling façade of the Gaelic order and the dispersal of the Gaelic nobles. Then, or before that collapse, there is no sign of the Irish people. Gaeldom was an order for aristocrats. The Gaelic bards would never sully their verse with a mention of the plebeians. Bardic literature has no fabliaux, no Langland, no Chaucer, nothing for the popular taste. And since about all that the average Irishman can know of his average ancestors under Gaeldom is that he must have had them, the

democratically-minded realists cannot work up a very passionate interest in their hypothetical doings.

Rather they are convinced that their true creators are those very modern men like Tone and O'Connell, who gave them revolution as a weapon and modernity for a prize. For the rest the story is explicitly human, and humanly simple and involved. Nothing in it is of much importance unless it happens to many people. The victories are neither sudden nor often romantic—land acts, county council bills, extensions of franchise, increasing prosperity, and finally political independence. The tragedies are collective—the Potato Famine, the evictions, the loss or defection of leaders setting the movement back by a decade, the drain of emigration, civil war. Even such a tragedy as Parnell's is the act and despair of the whole people, for he was downed by a momentum he could lead but not retard, and the mob that passed over his body wept bitterly for him.

3

THIS is history conceived within a range that would have seemed meaninglessly narrow to the previous generation of writers. It lacks the supernatural. Its great dimension is width, the limit of its height is human stature, its heroes are inescapably mortal. Indeed Yeats did convict it of monotony and fragmentariness, saying that now we know the world "through abstractions, statistics, time tables, through images that refuse to compose themselves into a clear design." "A nation," he said, "should be like an audience in some great theatre . . . watching the sacred drama of its own history; every spectator finding self and neighbour there, finding all the world there as we find the sun in the bright spot under the burning glass."

But the truth is that the clear design has not yet been composed. The drama is not complete, has indeed hardly reached a climax. For to win land and freedom does not mean to win all that goes with land and freedom. This march of a people was too swift to be elaborate. They had to concentrate on getting the big things first: the fundamentals of economic, political, and cultural freedom. Till after the Revolution they had little time for the details. When they were not fighting actively for something, they had to bend every last energy to the work of consolidating what had been gained last.

Only recently have they won that peace and stability in which the subtler manifestations of a culture can grow. Until Irish society is complete, the drabness of life in a restricted, semi-rural country without large ambitions is the inescapable obser-

vation from which Irish realism must begin. Meanwhile, one should remember that whatever fuller synthesis will come in the future will depend no little bit on the ability and integrity of the Irish artists.

In this interim of history, however, all his laudable integrity eases the Irish realist's path not at all. It was easy to reveal the Irish to themselves as saints, warriors, and the sons of kings, as the Young Irelanders did; or as godlike poets and dreamers, as the Celtic Revival writers did—and make them like it. It is not so easy to draw them as rebellious peasants, brave but muddleheaded conspirators, and small-town burgesses—and make them like that, too. Then when one cites the justifying facts, the proof is commonly taken as a worse insult than the picture.

Still, the greater difficulty is for the realist to satisfy himself. He is an Irishman and an artist, and needs richness and color, passion and release, as much as any romantic who ever lived. To be barred from them by his own determination to "see the facts and understand the picture" is no comfort. The self-censorship hurts as much as the official one. And in faithfully drawing a paltry truth one often gets, with much effort, a paltry result. It is not the mere crabbedness of his material that hurts—in other countries realists have successfully conquered worse: it is its narrowness and poverty, uncomplemented by any opposing wealth. Yeats and Synge could go out among the cottages or wander on the roads to learn what the people had to say, and then return to Coole Park, Lady Gregory's manor house, to write.

The present generation has no Coole Park. The big houses went in the Revolution, aristocratic Anglo-Irish drowned out by the floodtide of Irish democracy; and no native aristocracy has yet risen to replace them. "That," says O'Faoláin, "is our loss. . . . It means that for many Irish writers life exists on a small number of planes and their stories are lighted only from a few angles. . . . Regionalism is all very well when, as with Hardy or the Russians, it does not delimit one by a narrow circumference of values. When it does, it is in grave danger of making one's work pure parish-pump." For "it is . . . the *consciousness* of the existence of many modes of life, and some intimacy with them, [that] heightens the treatment of any one mode of life, gives the sense of echo, reverberations wider than the scene displayed, as well as more color and more variety in a writer's work taken as a whole." It is not only the lack of an O'Tolstoy that stands in the way of an Irish *War and Peace*.

Yet these inherent difficulties, however severe,

can be accepted in the spirit of Yeats's recognition that "only the greatest obstacle that can be contemplated without despair, rouses the will to full intensity." The realist's self-discipline, the poverty of his material, are tests of his courage and imagination. If he meets them successfully, his work will be the better for it, hardened and refined by stiffer opposition than any critic can raise.

4

THE external difficulties, best represented by the literary censorship, have no such positive use. They are negative obstacles put up between the artist and his audience, not between the artist and his work, and for the present can be passed only if he subordinates his judgment to a pettifogging morality he despises. The censorship has had no effect on the character of Irish literature. Every Irish author of any standing is represented on the list of banned books; none has tried to placate the censors. If the censorship were lifted tomorrow, the only immediate results would be that much energy now wasted in fighting its stupidity could be applied to better purposes, and the Irish people would have a better chance to read what has been written particularly for them. Perhaps, too, the artist would be cheered by knowing that he was no longer regarded officially as a dangerous underworld type, to be spied on and harried for the public safety.

For it is plain by now that the censor's hand falls most heavily, not on the purveyor of obscenity, but on the non-conforming writer. He is indeed outlawed. The action against his book is taken in secret. He has no appeal from the decision of the Board. He cannot expect the justice of a speedy trial, for his book may be banned as soon as it appears, or not till after the important first three or four months. Often books have been on the market eight or ten years before they excited the censors' horror. (A recent example is that of E. L. Voynich's *The Gadfly*, which got the axe after it had passed its fiftieth birthday.)

But most maddening of all is his knowledge that the very law under which he is penalized has been openly perverted by the censors themselves. They have accepted the authority it bestows. They have consistently ignored its reservations. Thus it is not at all surprising that the Irish writers demand, as an alternative to the removal of the censorship, the strict enforcement of the Censorship of Publications Act of 1928.

This was proposed, as one may discover from the Irish Parliamentary Debates for 1928-1929, with

many assurances of its limited nature. All the safeguards, the checks and balances, contained in it were harped on by its advocates. They pointed out that a book could be banned only if it was "in its general tendency indecent or obscene," or if it advocated unnatural methods of birth control, and that in any case the censors would be required to take into consideration the "literary or artistic merit of the work taken as a whole." Since the Act went into effect, about 1500 books have been proscribed, including just about every Irish novel worth reading.

This rather wholesale activity of the Board — for beside the hundred books banned on a yearly average, the censors most likely consider some others they do not ban — has given rise to two popular beliefs. First, that the censors have taken to reading only the marked passages in the books sent to them, thus slighting the last-named safeguard. And second, that, as sometimes happens with men of conscious virtue when vested with public power, they have assumed a certain broad franchise over what they consider a too narrow law.

That this second belief has some foundation a couple of quotations from a Senate debate on censorship, in the fall of 1942, may indicate. In the midst of a tortuous speech, Professor Magennis, the chairman of the Board, suddenly became quite frank. The book in question, he said,

was not condemned as indecent. . . . It was banned for indecency within the meaning of the Act — a very important difference. . . . As I was saying, if we disapprove of the sale and distribution of a book the mode in which we convey that disapproval to the Minister, and ask the Minister to prohibit the sale and distribution of that book is to report: "In its general tendency indecent." A technicality!

This is a revelation that must give great comfort to many an injured author. Privately, he can now understand, the censors consider him only a technical, not an actual, pornographer.

But the Minister for Justice was not so soft as Professor Magennis. Bluff and hearty, he stood to his guns. Asked by a Senator what the law of the state had to say about the safe period with regard to birth control, the Minister replied: —

I am not prepared to go into the Law of the State, but I repeat that I take full responsibility for the banning of this book. Whether the Board was technically and legally correct, whether the book in its general tendency was indecent and obscene, may be open to question, but on the ground that it was calculated to do untold harm I was perfectly satisfied it should be banned.

Such self-assured, self-righteous extralegality on the part of public officials defending their ad-

ministration of a law is certainly absurd. One might laugh at it as one laughs at some of the Board's more overt blunders: the banning of Shaw's *Black Girl in Her Search for God*, not for its controversial text — that would be illiberal — but for its illustrations; the banning of Kate O'Brien's *Land of Spices* for one brief mention of possible homosexuality in one of the minor characters, though the book, a story of a young girl's discovery of her religious vocation and of her later life in a convent, had been warmly reviewed in every English and American Catholic paper; the banning of *Laws of Life*, a manual of sex instruction for Catholics, which was found, too late, to have received the *permissu superiorum* of the Westminster Diocesan Council.

But in the end the results are not funny. An author's reputation and property are attacked without his being allowed any legal defense. He is smothered by a "gentlemen's agreement" to which neither he nor his readers have agreed. The law has at last been subverted to the level of personal prejudice, with effects that are to be noted in the rampant activity of every smut-hound and self-appointed censor in Ireland. The pharisaical motive behind it all is obvious — the more rigorous suppression of criticism than of vice.

The artist's protest against the whole stupid business has best been registered by O'Faoláin: —

We believe that any unnecessary interference with the public will is not merely a tyranny but a folly. It removes responsibility from the hands of the community before the community has had any adequate opportunity to exercise its own quiet methods of control. It thereby pre-empt's the activity of a healthy public opinion, and prevents that public opinion from (so to speak) growing by exercise. It kills the national conscience by giving it no scope to take or leave, to praise or condemn, to exercise its will or exercise its wisdom. By depriving morality of its freedom it reduces it to a machine without virtue.

O'Faoláin should know. For his fifteen years' activity in the cause of a healthy Irish public opinion he has received the censors' accolade more than once, while his efforts have never been sustained by any corresponding measure of public support. He can have no pretty illusions about his relation to the community. In Ireland the artist and independent thinker must stand alone, comforted by no popular sympathy and understanding, drawing steadily on his own unincremented morale. He cannot appeal to the Irish ruling class, the pious Nationalists the Revolution put into power, for even before the Revolution Padraic Pearse recognized and described their peculiar bigotry — "they challenge a great tyranny, but they erect their little tyrannies. 'Thou shalt not' is half the law of Ire-

land, and the other half is 'Thou must.' " As for an appeal to the people, any Irish author knows too well that if the Irish people cared a damn about the censorship, it would stop.

5

YET for all these obstructions which Irish artists must consider — and perhaps the worst is this public apathy and distrust — the quality of actual performance is encouragingly high. Significantly, though, it is highest in the smaller forms: the short story and realistic comedy, and in poetry, the lyric and semi-ballad. There is no grandly successful Irish novel. Since O'Casey's withdrawal the drama has been healthy and humorous — it is still uncensored — but pedestrian, with the two notable exceptions of Denis Johnston's *The Moon in the Yellow River* and Paul Vincent Carroll's *Shadow and Substance*. The death of F. R. Higgins, following so closely the death of Yeats, suddenly revealed the scarcity of poets in a country where poets had been as plentiful as journalists are elsewhere. And those who are left do not coalesce into a school. Their poems appear individually, with little reference to each other; and the absence of interplay and mutual criticism threatens a return of that provincial idiosyncrasy that plagued Irish poetry before Yeats taught it collaboration.

Yet the bigger victories have not been lost by default. The three best recent Irish novels all attempt the composition of some such clear design as Yeats demanded, some bright focus of history, and their failure makes one suspect that the design is simply not there to be revealed. History seems to have delayed giving a verdict on which the artist can comment.

Take, for example, the most forceful of these novels, O'Flaherty's *Famine*. When it appeared, O'Faoláin called it "Biblical." "It is," he wrote, "the Irish 'Exodus' in which there is no Moses to lead out the people of Israel, the starving Irish millions of the black forties to whom a moonstruck O'Connell was no help. It is characteristic of O'Flaherty that in *Famine* he lifts his theme out of the rut of despair by combining two of his best qualities — his power of describing natural phenomena, and his love for a big central figure to typify the things he hates or (as in this book) admires."

But does O'Flaherty succeed in lifting his theme out of the rut of despair? For an Irish reader perhaps, yes. He unconsciously adds the historical sequel and understands all that O'Flaherty intends to signify with his dimly drawn Young Irishmen and

the escape of his central characters to America. The non-Irish reader does not have that outlet. Or even if he does know enough Irish history to add the historical sequel, his emotions are not engaged by what is not in the book. O'Flaherty put all his vigor into the writing of *Famine*, uniting for the first time the furious speed and brutality of his other novels and the loving sensitivity of his short stories, but he is so moved by the suffering of his own people that he too often lets a brief indication support what an explanation should carry.

One feels that he wrote this book as an Irishman reads it, who grinds his teeth and curses and sweats and swears his way through it, supplying out of his own partisanship the conflict that hunger drowned out in the victims. Other readers cannot do that. To them this is not *the* Famine, but *a* famine. And they are oppressed and finally bored by the huge impersonality of the disaster.

For O'Flaherty has succeeded almost too well in conveying the sense of doom — first as the threat, then as the terror of impact when the blight rots the potato stalks in the fields, and finally when the blight comes again in the second year and the people can only stand by dumbly and watch their food turn into a stinking pulp. To survive for the first year they have used up all their possible resources. Now, whether they stand together or alone, they can do nothing but wait for death or for an unfriendly government to save them.

That O'Flaherty's big central figure, Mary, does escape the holocaust, — and with her, her husband and baby, — and that they escape through the aid of an embryonic revolutionary group, no longer has the forceful significance the author intended. The courage and stubborn hope and endurance with which O'Flaherty endowed her diminish to merely individual importance against that endless background of death. And the other characters, all powerfully drawn, share the diminution proportionately. We begin to see what Yeats meant when he said that "passive suffering is not a theme for poetry." The people, strongly alive at first, frantically alive later, at last become quiet and inarticulate as death comes near around them. In that dumbness the book ends. Even Mary and Martin escaping in the boat to America cannot talk of what they have left behind them. Their youth, their way of life, their people, are dead behind them. In the few determined conspiring men without names who rescued them is the seed of the future: long relentless revolution against English control.

But that seed is still hidden. Unless one knows the story of its growth, there is no purgation for the pity and terror O'Flaherty has so brilliantly aroused.

He has added a great deal to national art. He has failed of universality. The tragedy is universal. But escape to America, though historically authentic, is so singular as to seem the irrelevant work of a *deus ex machina*. For its own purposes, art must refine history to a clearer metal, as it refines everything else it uses.

6

THE other two novels — Seán O'Faoláin's *Come Back to Erin* and Frank O'Connor's *Dutch Interior* — fail of greatness less grandly. For one thing, they have no such tremendous theme. For a second, neither history nor their own experience gives the authors an answer to the problem they attack — "the problem of finding within the simplicity of the Irish world a way of life that does justice to the whole man." O'Flaherty suffered as he wrote of the "great hunger," but he suffered as a spectator. The evils O'Connor and O'Faoláin describe are daily irritations: pious hypocrisy in the middle class, apathy among the people, puritanism in the Catholic clergy, nationalism gone sour from too long standing, and the stingy, shoddy willingness to get everything as cheap as the most cockeyed practicality will allow.

In the environment they picture, isolation is the primary fact of life for every sensitive, open-spirited man. The politicians and puritans would isolate the whole country from the contagion of the venal, un-Irish world. The man finds himself alone in a little world of indifference and suspicion where the difficulty of communication is heart-breaking. There is plenty of talk — but talk on terms: to be serious is to put yourself in danger of something's being "got on" you. So you are witty. One can't pin down wit. It is a grand defense. And behind the defense, or in front of it, loneliness grows by disappointment after disappointment until self-corrosion begins to tarnish each fresh personality. That provincial environment is anemically poor in developed personalities. It is rich in the number and variety of its "characters." And, says Peter Devane, the secondary figure in *Dutch Interior*, "character is personality gone to seed . . . when 'tis all shaped and limited by circumstances and there isn't a kick left in it. . . . That's what I am, mister — a character!"

Yet for these men, too, there is the *deus ex machina* — the boat to America. And Frankie Hanafey, O'Faoláin's rebel hero, and Gus Devane, Peter's much loved younger brother, take it, for America is still escape and nourishment and the promise of all that necessary richness Ireland does not afford. But America is not the answer now any

more than it ever was. The Irishman must manage to survive in Ireland; all the wealth of the world will not make the transplanted man a whole man; he must grow from his own roots in his own country. So Gus and Frankie return, hungry for Ireland and its sweet peculiar flavor that outlasts the taste of disappointment and betrayal.

If only then the homecoming were met with an understanding as generous as the love that inspired it, there would be a resolution of the discord, for all that it would be on a minor key. But they return looking for the lovely Ireland time has distilled from memory and are overwhelmed on the spot by all the old frustration, all the cynical indifference from which they fled. Gus fights it for a while, hoping and half believing that his own enthusiasm will somehow break down the defenses and release the lively energy he knows exists; and it is only a final smashing betrayal that sends him flying again. Frankie stays — but for what? He fled as a hardened hungry rebel, a weapon of a man, whetted to a narrow blade by years on his keeping. In America, safe from the tension of the hunt, he drops his defenses bit by bit, tastes with a distrustful tongue the gentler pleasures, — poetry, music, the theater, unconstrained talk, — and suddenly realizing the fact of his dependent humanity, lets go every restraint and wallows innocently in his soul's food.

But there is tawdriness as well as innocence in that abandon. The Kingdom of Heaven does not belong to big babies. And when he advances, half against his will, to the arms of his brother's wife, freedom turns to cheapness — a particular kind of cheapness Irish poverty still does not allow. The fault, to be sure, is as much Ireland's as his own. One cannot learn sure, self-reliant manhood in a country whose leaders try to keep it a kindergarten for the Children of Mary. But the damage is done. When he, too, returns to Ireland it is as neither rebel nor enthusiast, but only as a ruefully good-natured man who has no confidence of the right direction for himself or his country, a man who has discovered his humanity but lost his purpose. One more of too many.

7

THERE is a great deal more to both books than I have accounted for: much insight, much humane knowledge, and in most of O'Faoláin's novel and all of O'Connor's, very adequate, beautiful writing. But their failure and the reasons for it are obvious enough. *Dutch Interior* is even more of a closed cir-

cuit than *Famine*; and like *Famine* it closes upon death by starvation, none the less bitter because it afflicts the heart instead of the belly. *Come Back to Erin* starts off with a firmly drawn picture of Ireland, progresses through an America described with a sympathetic objectivity amazing to find in a European novel, and, returning to Ireland, disperses rather than ends. It is almost as if O'Faoláin had answered the reader's "Well?" with a despairing "Well, what the hell?"

But, if he does, his despair is not the despair of inanition. If these men have not solved the problem, they have given a full courageous statement of it. It should be understood to their credit that they have elected to fight where they stand, refusing the two routes of escape taken by most — emigration or a return to the fairyland of the past. Like the man in O'Connor's story "Uprooted," they know that neither man nor nation can live on pap, no matter who proffers it. To go back to the cradle is to lie there a changeling.

... he went into the kitchen. His mother, the coloured shawl about her head, was blowing the fire. The bedroom door was open and he could see his father in shirt sleeves kneeling beside the bed, his face raised reverently towards a holy picture, his braces hanging down behind. He unbolted the half-door, went through the garden and out on the road. There was a magical light on everything. A boy on a horse rose suddenly against the sky, a startling picture. Through the apple green light over Carriganassa ran long streaks of crimson, so still they might have been enamelled. Magic, magic, magic; he saw it as in a children's picture book with all its colours intolerably bright; something he had outgrown and which he could never return to, while the world toward which he aspired was as remote and intangible as it had seemed in the despair of youth.

It seemed as if only now, for the first time, was he leaving home, for the first time and forever, saying good-bye to it all.

It may be that what O'Faoláin fears, will happen. That within a few years Irish literature will disappear for lack of support and lack of substance, leaving unsolved the vital questions it has raised. I do not believe it will. The poverty, timidity, conservatism, and selfish defensiveness these writers have attacked are the defects of uncertain youth, not of niggardly old age. The young must at last go out into the world as thousands have gone before them — to find that, insensibly, experience brings courage, and courage manhood. And in the new home man builds then from his own resources, he finds the familiar magic he said good-bye to in the old. It is the artist's unexpected reward.

"THE GUY IN THE NEXT BED"

by HENRIETTA SHARON

HENRIETTA SHARON, illustrator living in New York, had the idea of organizing a group of artists who would visit and sketch the wounded in near-by hospitals. How the boys in the wards took to the idea you will see in the pages which follow. Miss Sharon had as her associates Albert Hirschfeld (*Times* staff cartoonist), Berney Tobey (who had formerly sketched at Stage Door Canteen), Wallace Morgan (illustrator and AEF artist in the last war), Willard Fairchild, Louis Giacobbe (USN), George Greller (*Herald Tribune*), Victor de Pauw (of the *New Yorker* and *Fortune* staffs), and others who will appear in her account. This paper has been drawn from Miss Sharon's new book, *It's Good to Be Alive*, which Dodd, Mead will publish this spring.

I

IT WAS Allan Olson who told us that the drawings we were making of patients in the wards were not just entertainment for the patients. He said they had educational and therapeutic value. Olson was a Welfare Specialist, First Class, USNR, and his duties were to assist the Protestant chaplain at the Brooklyn Naval Hospital with everything regarding the welfare and recreation of the patients. These duties ran the gamut from arranging weddings, funerals, and dances to providing theater tickets, playing the organ for chapel services, and even taking under his wing our weekly program of artists. He knew every boy in the hospital, where he came from, and what was on his mind, any ambitions he had, the name of his girl, and where he hurt the most. We listened with amazement when he told us of the far-reaching results he traced from the sketches we were making.

One of the best stories was about Charles Paris, a commercial artist, who went to the Brooklyn Naval Hospital with us one evening. Robert McKay had brought Paris along. When we were halfway to the hospital, Paris informed me that he could only draw horses. This was staggering. I felt I could have coped with pin-up girls, but pin-up horses was too big a problem.

Olson solved it. He took Paris to one of the wards to draw for a boy who was so ill that for days he had been under a twenty-four-hour watch. The boy was a former cowboy from New Mexico, named Jimmy, with a passion for horses. Olson hoped that a drawing of a horse might arouse his interest.

He introduced Paris to Jimmy, who was lying flat in bed and didn't bother to speak. Paris sat

down by the bed and spread out his materials — he had brought water colors. Jimmy closed his eyes to show his lack of interest. But when Olson passed through the ward a little later, on the way back to his office, the former cowboy was resting on one elbow, watching the horse growing under Paris's fingers; and when Olson came back a little before nine to collect Paris, the boy was sitting up in bed, the finished drawing on his knees, eagerly discussing horses.

I took Paris back the next week at Olson's request. Olson told me that after Paris's first visit, the twenty-four-hour watch was no longer necessary; Jimmy had, apparently, made up his mind to get well. He was dressed and walking when Paris returned to the hospital and he introduced him to the other men in the ward as "My friend Mr. Paris, the artist."

The morale, we found, was the highest wherever the men had suffered the most. In the wards where men lay blind, or with draining stumps of amputated arms or legs, or with half their faces torn away; in the wards where they alternately shivered and burned with malaria, or ached with rheumatic fever; and in the wards where men lay for weary months in traction apparatus, the morale was high.

In the neuro-psychiatric wards the patients, their problems, and their reactions were entirely different and the atmosphere was not the same. Some of the men were suffering from combat hysteria or shock. Many of them had collapsed after hideous experiences under fire. On the other hand there were several who had cracked up because of homesickness, anxiety, fear, or the strain of military disci-

pline. Their neuroses were not always the direct result of war.

I felt a certain amount of tension when I first went into a psychopathic ward. The men were all up and dressed, but they kept away from me until I began to draw one of them, a sailor named Wade. Presently I was conscious of a ring of men silently watching. I looked up into a boyish, snub-nosed little face with a sprinkling of freckles on the short nose.

"We're nuts, you know," he said airily. "See?"

He leaned over my head, carefully removed something between his thumb and the third finger of his right hand, then flung up his hand as if releasing some winged creature. "Butterflies," he said.

They all laughed except Wade.

"Didn't they tell you we were nuts?" asked a sailor with a long, solemn face and sad eyes.

"Didn't they tell you I was?" I asked. "Artists, you know —"

That lightened the tension. Everybody began to talk. I had almost finished drawing Wade when the nurse came up to me.

"One of our patients would like to be sketched," she said. She pointed to a man at the other end of the ward. "Could you do him next?"

He was an ordinary sort of man. Nothing unusual about him except for the fact that both hands were bandaged. He didn't say very much. Afterward I was to wish I had talked with him more.

I heard the story much later from Olson. The man had been in a fire at sea and his hands had been badly burned. The flesh and some of the bone had been eaten away. The doctors had done a particularly skillful job of bone and skin grafting and the patient was nearly cured, but not in his own mind. Nothing would induce him to use his hands, because he was convinced they were useless. Even various forms of occupational therapy failed. He became morose and was finally moved to the psychopathic ward. He let his beard grow, on the plea that he couldn't shave himself.

For some reason, that first night I went into the ward he wanted to have his picture drawn. Some latent pride, I suppose, made him want to look his best for his wife. Whatever he thought, he marched himself into the head and with the "useless" hands shaved off his beard; then he sat for his portrait. From that time on he began to use his hands, and a month or so afterward he went back to sea duty.

2

BY NOVEMBER we had settled down to a routine: St. Albans every Monday night, Brooklyn every

Thursday night. The group of artists was growing. Willard Fairchild brought along Ruth Rodgers, who had a husband in the Navy somewhere in the South Pacific. Wally Morgan brought John Holmgren and Bill Pachner. Ann Schabbehar, whose fiancé was in India with the RAF, joined us. Others who came were Travis Cliett, Jean Robins, Charles Hawes, Ray Prohaska, Berj Gary, Frank Bensing and his daughter Punkie, John Vickery, Kay Kenny, and Aurilla Ashenbach.

Some months after we started work in the hospitals, we found that the patients wanted copies of the drawings, so we started to photostat them. Each artist paid for the photostating of his or her drawings, and the patient received the original to send home and a print and a negative for himself. Many of the patients had copies made from the negative and sent them to girl friends as Christmas presents. One of the boys asked an artist to please write on the drawing, "To the One and Only," and then asked if he could have ten copies.

One Thursday the whole staff of "Superman" — ten of them, including Joe Shuster, artist-creator of the famous comic strip — went with me to the Brooklyn Naval Hospital. I had gone to the "Superman" office one day during my lunch hour and told them the story. They all agreed to go. Harry Childs, in charge of publicity for "Superman," made the arrangements (incidentally, without benefit of publicity). Seven staff artists, Harry Childs, and Joe Shuster himself came along. They brought a hundred and fifty comic magazines and a hundred and fifty cartons of cigarettes to give to the men.

The patients learned how comics are made. They had their pictures drawn with their own heads and Superman bodies. And they were loaded down with cigarettes and comic magazines. Modest little Joe Shuster took the wards by storm.

All my spare time was spent in calling artists. Most of them were eager to try it. Occasionally somebody would say, "Oh, I couldn't go into a hospital. I'm too tender-hearted."

Everyone went for the first time under the impression that he would find the hospitals depressing, and was surprised when he didn't.

Sometimes an artist would say to me in a worried voice, "I'm a IV-F, you know, — my eyes, — but I look perfectly healthy. Won't they resent me?"

But the patients never did; they felt only gratitude as long as the artist was sincere and the drawing was good.

Sometimes an artist would say, "But I shouldn't know what to talk about. What could I say to them?"

After the first visit no one gave that problem an-

other thought. There was so much to talk about — the patient's wife or his girl or his home town, or how the artist got to be an artist. If the patient wasn't talkative, that didn't matter either; the artist just concentrated on his job.

Sometimes an artist would say, "But how can I work with all the distractions and the bad lights?"

That problem was solved only by getting used to the surroundings. At first the noise, the talkative audience of kibitzers, the laughing patient (somebody was always making him laugh), the dim center lights, all were disturbing. But after the artist had gone to the hospital several times he found that all these little difficulties became just a part of the job. He got into a certain rhythm. He began to sacrifice style and artistic drawing to getting a likeness. He developed a routine, according to his speed, and turned out from two to five drawings a night.

Often for a very sick patient, who couldn't sit long, the artist had to make a "quickie." For the foreshortened drawings, where a man was flat in bed, he developed a technique. I always had to stand up to draw a bed patient because I was too short to see him when I sat down. Sometimes a patient wanted to be drawn in a uniform, complete with hat and insignia. The one clear objective was to please the patient. That was all that mattered.

3

IT WAS in one of the surgical wards at St. Albans Naval Hospital that I met Eddie. Eddie came from New Orleans. He was very dark, with the blue blackness of the full-blooded Negro. He was tall, and even in his wheelchair he gave the impression of standing erect. The night I drew his picture the first thing I noticed was the sweetness in his face — that and the way he crinkled it up to laugh. They were hard qualities to capture on paper and the drawing didn't have his spirit.

I was disappointed with it, but he seemed pleased. When I signed the drawing he gave me his name. It was a French name, musical and flowing. I pronounced it as I wrote it and Eddie laughed.

"That's right," he said delightedly. "That's just right. You should hear what the Navy does to it."

Eddie had been a gunner on a mine sweeper. The mine sweeper had been blown up in the Mediterranean and Eddie was just completing his fifth month with his leg in a plaster cast.

One of the Red Cross recreation workers told me Eddie was a hero — that he had saved the lives of several men aboard his ship. But Eddie never mentioned it.

"When the explosion came," said Eddie, "I was blown up fifteen feet in the air. I landed on the deck with an awful crash."

"Didn't it knock you out?"

"No," said Eddie, "it was funny, it didn't. I kept wondering why it didn't. I just laid there wondering why it didn't. Blood was gushing out of my leg and out of my hand. I was lying in a pool of blood. I never saw anything like it before. There was a guy lying on top of me and he was screaming. There was another guy with half his face shot off. I recognized him — Swanson, one of the gunners. . . . I don't rightly remember how they got us off, but they did — all of us. I saw the ship go down. You know, it was funny," Eddie said in his soft voice, "I was glad to see the ship go down — all of that blood and all — I was glad to see it go down."

"They took us off at Bizerte and laid us on the decks. There were boatloads of guys being brought in. I was afraid they would amputate my leg — it was broken in several places — and they were doing a lot of amputating to save guys from dying. I figured maybe I wasn't going to die after all. I just laid there thinking. It was funny how I kept thinking about God. It seemed as if thinking about God was the only thing I could do. It seemed as if I'd gotten down to cases for the first time in my life and the only real things were life and death and God. Everything was kind of wrapped around with maybes. Maybe they'd save my leg. Maybe I wouldn't die. Maybe I'd go home."

"They put me in a hospital in Bizerte. Then after a while they moved me. I was in four other hospitals before they sent me back to the States. It was good to be back — it was good to be alive. But I want to get into service again," he added after a pause; "I want to get back in until it's over."

"Most of them feel like that," I said.

"Yes," said Eddie, "I think the other guys feel like that. Most of us feel the same way about things."

"I've noticed that — the way you share things, the way you build each other up."

"Sure," said Eddie. "It happens that way. Shep says nobody can build you up like the guy in the next bed."

The Monday night after Christmas we went to St. Albans. A huge Christmas tree decorated the Recreation Hall; late-arriving gifts stood piled up in the Red Cross office; and so many patients had gone on leave that the wards seemed almost deserted.

That night, I worked in a room off one of the wards. There were three patients in this room and

they had hung some mistletoe over the door and were exacting payment from every nurse or Wave corpsman who came in.

The three patients, who were all in casts, had been in the hospital a long time. There was a big tow-headed fellow from Wisconsin, known as Lefty. He had been a southpaw pitcher in some minor baseball league. There was Ricardo, a Spaniard from Mexico City. And there was Steiner, a Jewish boy from the Bronx.

I drew Steiner's picture last. Steiner had been a cook aboard an airplane carrier. The carrier had been hit and Steiner had had his back broken. For months he had been incased in a plaster cast like a turtle inside his shell. Lefty called him "Brother Terrapin."

"How about putting a hat on me?" Steiner asked.

"A hat!" snorted Lefty. "With that coffin you're wearin'?"

"You know what happens to them guys in body casts?" Lefty asked me while I was drawing the hat on Steiner.

"What?"

"They're limited to three glasses of beer, so they won't swell up and crack the cast," said Lefty delightedly.

"Besides," said Ricardo, "they stink."

"Here's your picture," I said to Steiner.

Steiner took it and held it up for the others to see.

"Jeez!" breathed Lefty. "Did you flatter that guy!"

"Are you going to send it to your wife?" I asked. Steiner shook his head.

"I haven't got a wife," he said disgustedly. "I'd only been married a month when I got my orders, and when I got back she said she'd fallen in love with another guy. So — we got a divorce."

"Well, what'd you expect?" demanded Lefty. He turned to me. "Steiner only knew the girl two weeks, and she was just eighteen. I told him the next time he got married, to marry a woman."

"Whom *are* you going to send it to?" I asked.

"Believe it or not," said Steiner, "I'm gonna send it to my mother-in-law. She's a grand old girl."

"Now I've heard everything," said Lefty.

I had drawn a number of the boys in his ward at St. Albans before I drew Buck. Buck was hard to convince. He was a cynic. When I first asked if I might draw his picture, he said, "How much is it?"

"Nothing."

"What's the catch?"

"There isn't any."

He looked at me suspiciously out of a pair of

ironic black eyes — eyes that didn't quite match in size.

"Yeah?" said Buck. "There's always a catch."

So I went to the next bed and drew Ellis. Ellis was Buck's pal. He was little and tubby with a round, merry face.

"Don't pay any attention to Buck," said Ellis. "He's got a suspicious nature. He thinks everybody is mazuma-minded the way he is."

"And who," demanded Buck, "won five dollars off of me last night in a gyp game?"

"Oh, that," murmured Ellis depreciatingly.

"Hold your head still," I said.

"I can't," said Ellis, "or I'll go to sleep."

This proved to be true and I finished his drawing under difficulties. Buck observed it impartially.

"So that's the catch," he remarked coolly.

"What catch?" I demanded with exasperation.

"You flatter the boys," he said. "You build up their egos. You," he said accusingly, "are a Do-Gooder!"

I went home chastened.

But the next week I was back in the same ward drawing another boy. Buck heckled me all the time I was making the drawing.

When I finally drew Buck's picture it was a minor triumph.

"But don't let it set you up," Buck warned me. "I'm not impressed, you understand — except by your persistence. I never saw anyone so damned persistent."

4

IN THE summer of 1944, Kay Kenny and I went to Valley Forge General Hospital. We lived in the Nurses' Quarters, a big, beautifully kept building set a little apart from the hospital. We ate our meals with the nurses and WAC officers attached to the hospital staff and sketched in the wards during the day.

Although it is a general hospital and handles every type of case, Valley Forge is famous as one of the five Army hospitals — Walter Reed, Letterman, Bushnell, and O'Reilly are the others — specializing in plastic surgery. New surgical techniques and improvements of old ones are being used here by some of the finest plastic surgeons in the world. The famous plastic surgeon at Valley Forge is Lieutenant Colonel Brown, and Kay and I saw many evidences of the miracles he had performed.

Colonel Brown was away on leave when we were there, so that we were unable to meet him, but we talked with one of his assistants, Sergeant Eliscu.

Technical Sergeant Frank Eliscu used to be a

sculptor. His job at the hospital was to make careful drawings of each plastic surgery patient from the time of his entrance into the hospital to the time when he was cured. He also made plaster masks of the patients, and while we looked through the sketches and studied the masks, he told us stories about some of the cures performed.

"How do you like the work you are doing?" I asked.

The Sergeant turned his eager dark eyes on me.

"I like it," he said. "I like being a part of it. To rebuild men's faces is the greatest creative work I've ever done. Look there," he said, pointing.

Behind the glass doors of a cabinet filled with various art materials were several small bronzes. One was the figure of a fawn, another of a cock. They were delicately and beautifully made.

"That was the sort of thing I did in civilian life," said the Sergeant.

He pointed to a mask hanging over his desk. The face was grim. The nose was a gaping hole; one side of the jaw was crushed; the mouth was drawn into a sneer. The Sergeant had shown us the sketches of the rehabilitated face that went with the mask.

"That's the sort of thing I do now," he said. "I'd rather be doing it."

Joe was not very tall and he was built like a piece of spaghetti. A long red scar ran down the side of his face from his forehead to his chin. On his left temple another scar emerged from his eyebrow and crawled halfway up to his hairline. Both scars lifted his eyebrows and lent him a permanently quizzical expression. His whole face was a little lopsided like a drawing made by a child. These were Joe's visible scars. In addition, he had a silver kneecap, and a silver plate inside his head.

The day before, when I had drawn his picture, he had said to me royally, "Make me look the way I'm going to look when the doc gets through with me."

He had seemed to be in no doubt that he was going to look all right. So I had studied the line of his features and drawn him with an eye to the future.

"Where are you from?" I asked.

"Virginia." His lopsided mouth twisted into a grin. "But not one of the F.F.V.'s. I belong to the new order." He indicated the white letters on his dark-red hospital pajamas. "MD, USA. Know what they stand for?"

"Not as regards the inner circles," I admitted.

"Many Die," he quoted. "U Shall Also."

"That's not very encouraging."

"It's only a joke," he explained solemnly. "Nobody thinks they're going to die when they get in the doc's hands. Have you met him — Colonel Brown, I mean?"

"No."

"He's terrific," Joe said. "There's nobody like him. He's the best plastic surgeon in the world," he said with conviction, "and besides that he's such a damn human guy."

"I've heard about some of his miracles."

"After a while," said Joe, "you get used to seeing miracles performed every day. Look at Ernie over there. — Ernie!" he called across the ward.

Ernie came over.

"Ernie," said Joe, "don't you think what the doc did for your face was a miracle?"

Ernie jerked a thumb in the direction of the drawing. "I think what she's doin' for *your* face is a bigger miracle," he drawled.

Joe was patient.

"Ernie didn't have any nose when he came," he explained. "Nor any left eye, either. He was a sight — weren't you, Ernie?"

This time Ernie agreed. "When they seen me at Stark," he said, "the only way they could tell my face from a piece of beefsteak was because it didn't have no points on it."

Joe looked pained.

"Ernie," he explained, "is given to jokes."

On the Thursday following August 19, 1944, we celebrated the end of a year of drawing in the wards at the Brooklyn Naval Hospital. Olson was there, and some of the patients I had met in those first months were still in the hospital.

We knew that the men we had seen in the hospitals during the last year were only the advance guard of those who were to come. And the hospitals we worked in were a patch on the national quilt. There were men we knew who had been hospitalized for two years with no time limit set upon their departure, and there would be more of these. Long after the war had drawn to its close, the wounded would lie in the wards of the Army and Navy hospitals all over the country waiting to get well, waiting to go home.

FREEDOM COMES TO THE PHILIPPINES

by FRANCIS B. SAYRE

I

AS AMERICAN troops move again into the Philippines, a new era of American activity in the Far East opens up. Far more crucial than 1898 will be the years immediately ahead. How will America build for peace in Asia?

Take a look at the map of Eastern Asia. Here is China, with her 450 million people bound by abject poverty, but heroic and unconquerable. After the war China will probably crowd into the space of a few years a profound agrarian, plus an industrial, plus a social revolution, as Japan and Russia did before her. Not many years hence China will be intoxicated with the ferment of modernism and resurgent with new power.

Here is Japan, with her 73 million people embittered by the results of their unhappy adventure, crushed for the time being, frustrated and dangerous. Here to the south are French Indo-China, British Malaya, and the Netherlands East Indies, millions of human beings of different races and languages and cultures, looking forward with hope to some new solution under the United Nations of the difficult problem of colonial government.

Here, still farther south, are Australia and New Zealand, vigorous, growing parts of the British Commonwealth, ambitious for a powerful place in the Pacific world and determined that next time, when the yellow or brown races threaten to descend from the north, they will either be in a position to defend

themselves successfully or else members of a community of states coöperating and armed to keep the peace.

In the strategic center of all this mass of surging peoples, on the very crossroads of the great paths of commerce between Asia and America and the North and South Pacific, at the inevitable junction point of air route travel east, west, north, south, a dispersing center for pouring American ideas and American products into the Orient, stand the Philippines.

All of Asia, aspiring to freedom, has its eyes fixed on American conduct in the Philippines. There the drama is approaching climax. One misstep may cost America her chance to exert a profound influence for future peace in Asia. It is of infinite importance that the American people understand the problems of the Philippines and the intimate relationship of those problems to the future peace of Asia.

When I think of the Philippines the picture is filled with beauty. Never have I seen a fairer sight than the breath-taking view from the American High Commissioner's residence at Baguio, the "summer capital" in Central Luzon. High up among the drifting clouds, from a jutting spur that stands out far above great empty spaces below, we used to look across bottomless valleys to range upon range of towering mountains to the north, fading away in the high distance, constantly under the play of sunlight and shadow and changing greens and blues, never two days the same, hauntingly beautiful, unforgettable.

I think of little-frequented roadways in the Southern Islands, winding in and out through groves of vivid green coconut palms, skirting along blue, surf-fringed bays. I think of the rice terraces at Bontoc, jeweled mountainsides of jade green color and intricate design, or of the hillsides of abaca trees at Davao, or of the great forests of giant tropical growth in the interior of Mindanao, as untouched as in the days when man first walked in the jungle.

The people who make their home in the 7000

A lawyer by training, FRANCIS B. SAYRE gained his first experience in the Far East when in 1923 he served as Adviser in Foreign Affairs to the Siamese Government. In 1925 and 1926 he negotiated in behalf of Siam new political and commercial treaties with the great powers. In 1933 he was called to Washington, where for six years he served as Assistant Secretary of State charged with the negotiation of the American trade agreements. The President appointed him High Commissioner to the Philippines in 1939, and he observed the islands closely and fairly during those precarious years when the Commonwealth was finding its feet. In 1942, after the departure of President Quezon, acting under instructions from President Roosevelt he escaped with his wife and young son by submarine from Corregidor when surrender was inevitable.

islands of the Philippine archipelago are a mixture of many races. Approximately 85 per cent are an Indonesian-Malay blend. From the far parts of Eastern and Southeastern Asia, between the years 700 and 1450, came traders, fishermen, refugees, marauders, missionaries, invading conquerors. We know little or nothing about how or why they came. In spite of the unifying influences of three centuries of Spanish domination and of over a generation of American rule, primitive groups still tenaciously retain their ancient ways and individual characteristics. No single language is spoken throughout the Islands.

Deep in the mountain fastnesses of Luzon, far from roads or human habitations, I have chanced upon the most primitive beings I have ever met — stray Negritos, shy as wild animals, half-naked, hunting through the mountain forests with bow and arrow, sleeping on cold nights in the warm ashes of their campfires.

Revealing stories are told of them. One afternoon, soon after the outbreak of the Japanese war, a band of Negritos appeared at Fort Stotsenberg carrying two Japanese air pilots tightly bound. "Who are these men we saw descending from the sky?" was their laconic inquiry. "Japanese soldiers," explained General Edward King. "Japan has declared war against the United States." Their leader stepped forward. "Then I, King of the Negritos, declare war against Japan," he exclaimed.

From these primitive Negritos, who number only a few thousands, or from the far more numerous warlike and fearless Moros of Jolo and Mindanao, or from the head-hunting tribes of Northern Luzon, who still on occasion revert to their ancient practices, it is a far cry to the dapper, white-suited students of the University of the Philippines or to the lordly sugar planters who occupy positions of commanding importance in Manila and in the provincial capitals.

Of the total population of the Philippines about one per cent (166,000) are foreigners. About 70 per cent (117,500) of these aliens are Chinese, and according to the 1939 census some 29,000 were Japanese. The Americans in the Islands then totaled 8700 and the Spaniards 4600.

2

Most casual American visitors gain hasty impressions of the Filipinos from wealthy mestizo families who dwell in affluent Manila homes, or from politicians who adroitly manipulate national and local political machines, or from the jostling and dense

throngs of polyglot city peoples who crowd Manila streets or stake their money upon exciting games of *jai alai* on a hot April night.

But it is not the sugar magnates or Manila-trained professionals or government officials who will determine Philippine destiny. To understand the Philippines and to get to the heart of their problems one must turn to the untutored, poverty-ridden peasants who constitute the majority of the 17 million Filipinos in the Islands. The peasant lives simply, close to the land, cultivating with his lumbering carabao his bit of rice or *camotes* or tobacco, honest, happy-go-lucky, struggling to keep free from debt but proving generally an easy prey to the landlord and the moneylender.

His innate good nature shows in his smiling face; and somehow, in spite of his poverty, one feels that he has learned the high art of distilling happiness from life. His children are always at the center of his family life, and also his carabao and his fighting cock. I remember how outraged some were when, on the occasion of one of my inspection trips through Northern Luzon, the local governor, unknown to me, had ordered the highroad over which I must pass cleared of all children, chickens, and carabaos. For two days they had to be confined so that the High Commissioner's car could maintain its lordly course unimpeded.

Has the peasant's life been really changed by forty years of American rule? Perhaps not so fundamentally as many Americans would like to think. But after the Americans came, at least he had uncontaminated water at the village well and was free from cholera and plague and smallpox. He could send his children to a good *barrio* school where they could learn to read and write English. Good roads and radios exposed him to stimulating outside influences. The ferment of coming independence is in his soul. He thinks of America as a friend who brought good gifts.

When the war broke and Japanese troops were hunting down their prey, it was to the native peasant that many a hard-pressed American or Filipino guerrilla turned for help and shelter. His loyalty through those dark days stands out, shining and unforgettable. The future of the Philippines is in his keeping.

Approximately 100,000 newly mobilized Filipino troops, many of them fresh in from the fields, some 12,000 Philippine Scouts, and some 19,000 American troops were in the Islands when the Japanese attacked. On Bataan and Corregidor, Filipinos and Americans stuck it out together, with insufficient food, munitions, and medical supplies, with no airplanes left, fighting a hopeless fight, with nothing

ahead but defeat or death. Just before Corregidor fell, General Wainwright, its heroic commander, wrote these words: "As I write this we are subjected to terrific air and artillery bombardment and it is unreasonable to expect that we can hold out for long. We have done our best, both here and on Bataan, and although beaten we are still unashamed."

That heroic fight was a magnificent vindication of forty years of American tutelage in the Philippines — forty years of patient and understanding effort to train for coming independence a people who had been for centuries held down under alien rule.

3

NEVER before has there been anything quite like the story of Philippine-American relationships.

Mr. Taft, the first Governor General of the Philippines, inaugurated the policy of "the Philippines for the Filipinos." In less than two years legislative power over the Islands was transferred from the military governor to the newly created "Philippine Commission." In the following year Governor Taft appointed three Filipinos as members of this Commission. In 1907 a Philippine Assembly was inaugurated as the lower house of the legislature, with the Philippine Commission serving as the upper house.

In 1913, President Wilson, pressing forward upon the policy of educating the Filipinos in the art of self-government, appointed to the Philippine Commission a majority of Filipinos. He proceeded to Filipinize the administration of the Islands as rapidly as possible. "We must hold steadily in view their ultimate independence," he declared in his Annual Message of December 2, 1913, "and we must move toward the time of that independence as steadily as the way can be cleared and the foundations thoughtfully and permanently laid."

Two and a half years later the passage of the Jones Act still further increased the sphere of Philippine autonomy by abolishing the Philippine Commission and creating in its place an elective Philippine Senate.

During the whole of this time America assisted the Islands with much of the best she had to give — men, ideas, sacrificial effort, money, material resources. She sent out men and women of skill and courage to teach and to serve, pioneers of Western democracy. The two peoples, aided by the talents of those from other countries, buckled down to work, to make the Islands one of the healthiest and happiest spots in the Pacific. They set up schools and raised the standard of literacy from 20.2 per cent in

1903 to 48.8 per cent in 1939. They taught English as a common language by which Filipinos of different tongues and different races could achieve national unity.

Americans inspired the building of roadways linking together distant parts of the Islands. They taught sanitation and inaugurated campaigns against disease, so that the scourges of cholera and smallpox were practically stamped out, reducing the death rate from 47.2 per thousand in 1903 to 16.87 per thousand in 1939. Americans and Filipinos together opened up mines, introduced revolutionary changes in agricultural and industrial methods, and developed new industries. The national income, measured by overseas and domestic trade values, increased fivefold. Through these common efforts Filipinos absorbed American ideas and American ways of life.

True, the Filipinos absorbed the bad as well as the good. Furthermore, much remained unachieved. In spite of many salutary and outstanding accomplishments, neither had a sizable independent middle class been developed nor a sound and balanced economy been achieved. The bulk of the newly created income went to the government, to landlords, and to urban areas, and served but little to ameliorate living conditions among the almost feudal peasantry and tenantry. The relative numbers of these tenants were not materially reduced. Maldistribution of population, of land, and of wealth in many forms continued. The gap between the mass of the population and the small governing class broadened, and many social problems remained unsolved.

But in spite of American shortcomings and failures and of Filipino ineptitude or misunderstanding, the peoples of the Philippine archipelago, within the span of a single generation, were transformed into a unified, progress-conscious nation, with vastly improved general standards of living, a sound public school system, good sanitation and public health, modern roads and transport systems, and the developing ability to govern themselves. It was an outstanding achievement. The experiment proved that in the government of alien peoples a policy based upon the welfare of the governed rather than upon power politics and exploitation can be both beneficent and practical.

Exploitation is no longer a practical basis, under twentieth-century conditions, upon which to rest colonial administration. The problem of colonial government never will be solved until we realize that the supreme values to be conserved are human personalities. Because America's underlying objective in her Philippine policy was the welfare of the

Filipinos, the Filipinos fought to the death against the Japanese for American ideals and the American way of life.

In 1934 Congress passed the Philippine Independence Act, giving to the Filipino people the right to adopt a Constitution, to set up a largely autonomous Commonwealth Government for an interim ten-year period, and thereafter to enjoy complete independence. The Act provides for a Commonwealth President and Vice President and for a legislative Assembly, all freely elected by the Filipino people. Under the provisions of the Act the date set for full independence is July 4, 1946.

On November 15, 1935, the new Commonwealth Government was inaugurated. Manuel Quezon, one of the most colorful figures of the Far East, was elected as the first President. Always dramatic, charming beyond words to all whom he set out to win, impulsive, adroit, daring, ambitious, he had outwitted and outmaneuvered every rival and stood clearly at the forefront, the unquestioned political leader of the Philippines.

During the six years that followed, the Filipino people proved that they are capable of self-government. They organized a smoothly running Assembly. They established Commonwealth courts. They set up provincial governments. They successfully took over the public administrative services. What was lost in increased costs of government, in lowered standards, in slackened achievements, was more than offset by newly won experience and national self-respect.

4

AFTER the inauguration of the Commonwealth Government, through the difficult transition stage leading to independence, it became the delicate task of the United States High Commissioner, who represented the President in the Philippines, to give as much help as possible to the Filipino people—largely by personal influence and suggestion rather than by constitutional authority. The exercise, no matter how tactful, of even such residuary power as remained in American hands was frequently an irritation to Filipinos. Quite understandably they wanted to see the Philippine flag flying at the top of the masthead and not underneath the American flag.

Delicate situations constantly arose. For instance, there was the issue of education. For forty years Americans had labored, and labored valiantly, to overcome the appalling illiteracy prevailing at the end of Spanish rule. They had built elementary government schools in every small *barrio*, organized

high schools and universities, and lifted education above sectarian pressures and politics.

In 1940 the Philippine Assembly passed an act authorizing wide revision of the elementary school system, reducing the elementary course from seven to six years. This was followed by strong agitation on the part of certain sectarian groups to reduce the high school and the college course each from four to three years. Feeling ran high. The controversy was interrupted by the outbreak of the war. At the same time President Quezon was seeking to establish Tagalog as the national language, in spite of the fact that adequate Tagalog textbooks and Tagalog literature do not exist and that Tagalog is distinctly a minority language in the Philippines. And under the Commonwealth form of government these were issues exclusively for the Commonwealth to decide.

Even in financial matters American officials, in the main, had to follow a hands-off policy. By virtue of careful and efficient administration the United States had turned the government over to the Filipino people in 1935 a highly solvent administration with considerable surpluses and reserves. Under the six years of the Commonwealth Government, however, expenditures had increased at such a pace that in spite of augmented revenues there were mounting deficits which were met by the use of surpluses built up under the American administration; and for the fiscal year 1942 the Assembly had voted to meet the current deficit by use of the remaining surplus from previous years and by the sale of a bond issue of 10 million dollars. The continued expenditure by the Commonwealth Government of the large sums turned over by the United States, collected as excise taxes on Philippine coconut oil, varying from 17 to 20 million dollars every year, and equal to nearly 40 per cent of the Commonwealth revenues from all other sources, contributed to the maintenance of prices and production costs at levels well above those of other tropical countries with which the Philippines will have to compete after attaining independence.

In short, six years of experience proved the Commonwealth experiment serviceable and workable as an interim arrangement for a youthful people attaining nationhood, but impracticable and unsatisfactory as a permanent form of government. It has spelled irritations and frustrations on both sides. It has meant in the last analysis division of power between two widely different peoples. Such an arrangement is unsatisfactory to both peoples and therefore lacks stability.

In the Philippines the hour has struck. Independence is the only practicable way forward.

Commitments have been made and expectations have been built up on the part of both peoples. There is no turning back now.

Are the Filipinos ready for independence? There is only one way in which that question can be truly answered. That is through the actual experiment. Was the United States ready for independence in 1776? There were many people at that time who would have answered no. By actual experiment we proved that we were.

In a strongly rooted independent Philippine nation America has a crucial stake. For over forty years we have been at work implanting in the Filipinos our ideas of individual liberty and the democratic way of life. Their success means our success in furthering American ideas and ideals throughout the strategic East.

Last June Congress passed a joint resolution to make good the pledge of freedom. In words portentous for the future of the Filipino people, Congress authorized the President, "after proclaiming that constitutional processes and normal functions of government have been restored in the Philippine Islands, and after consultation with the President of the Philippines, to advance the date of the independence of the Philippine Islands by proclaiming their independence as a separate and self-governing nation prior to July 4, 1946."

Thus America stands committed to give to the Filipino people full independence after the Japanese aggressors are driven out and "constitutional processes and normal functions of government" have been restored to the Philippines. Standing today at the helm of the Commonwealth government-in-exile is Sergio Osmeña, who as Vice President succeeded President Quezon upon the latter's death on August 1, 1944. President Osmeña, of the same age as President Quezon and formerly his political rival, has for many years been a leader in Philippine public life. Dependable, of tempered and reasoned judgment, wise, respected throughout the Philippines, he promises in the difficult years ahead to prove an able leader, friendly to Americans and always ready to coöperate.

5

PERHAPS the greatest difficulty confronting the new government will be how to achieve economic independence. When the Philippines became part of the American nation in 1898, the Filipinos were given free access to the highly protected American market—one of the richest in the world. This right to send Philippine products into the United States free of duty and to sell them there for

remunerative prices, while other nations had to pay high duties on similar imports into the United States, proved to be an economic gold mine for the Filipinos. For instance, because they could ship sugar duty-free to the United States, Philippine sugar producers in 1937 received about 41 million dollars more than they would have obtained if they had sold an equivalent amount of sugar at the world price.

Under such conditions it has been inevitable from the outset that the Filipino people should concentrate their productive effort upon those commodities which could be sold in the United States market at prices maintained above world levels by American legislation. Of the total value of Philippine exports, the United States accounted for 19 per cent in 1900, 46 per cent in 1910, 70 per cent in 1920, and an average of 85 per cent in the five years ending in 1940.

In short, although during the past forty years we were doing everything possible to prepare the Filipinos for political independence, the effect of our economic policy was to make them even more dependent upon the United States. With four fifths of Philippine products before the war dependent upon American markets, the United States could not suddenly shut Philippine producers out of the duty-free American markets without entailing grave injury to the entire Philippine economy.

Permanent free entry for Philippine products in the American market offers no solution. If the Filipino people are ever to have the independence which they crave, clearly their fundamental economy and means of livelihood must be free from dependence upon changeable legislative majorities in the United States Congress. Political independence without economic independence would be a mockery. Furthermore, if stable foundations are to be built for a lasting world peace, the post-war trade arrangements must be built upon equality of commercial treatment to all and not upon special trade preferences and discriminations. If the United States grants and receives exclusive preferential treatment in areas with which it has close political ties, it would be difficult for us successfully to oppose imperial and Dominion preferences in the British Empire and elsewhere.

The solution has been sought in gradual and progressive increases of American duties on Philippine products. The Independence Act of 1934 provided for increasing economic limitations and restrictions upon the shipment of Philippine products to the United States during the interim ten-year period. The Joint Preparatory Committee on Philippine Affairs, which explored the problem in 1937 and 1938, recommended that the elimination of Philip-

pine preferences should be achieved only gradually and progressively at the rate of 5 per cent a year for twenty years.

The present war has profoundly changed the situation. Since 1941, Filipinos have been able to ship no sugar or other products to American markets. It is reported that sugar cultivation, except for home consumption and the manufacture of alcohol for fuel, has been practically stopped. The copra and coconut oil industry is also stagnant. Attempts to grow cotton as a commercial crop are said to have failed.

When liberation comes, presumably sugar cultivation in the Philippines will be on a home-consumption basis. If the new Philippine government after the war is wise enough and strong enough to prevent a return to pre-war sugar production figures, one of the great milestones on the way to economic independence will be passed.

The building of the new Philippine economy will call for a high order of planning and statesmanship. Largely because of American activity for the past forty years, the Filipino's standard of living and also his living costs have risen considerably above those of his competing Far Eastern neighbors.

Of course, the bulk of production will continue to be for home consumption; and here other considerations will apply. But the Filipinos will need imports from abroad; and to buy these, they must produce a considerable quantity of goods for export.

If and when independence shuts the Filipinos out of the protected American markets, they will be forced to sell in world markets in competition with other areas with lower standards of living and production costs. They will have to turn away from the production of surpluses like sugar, which are salable only in the protected American market, and learn to produce goods which they can sell at a profit in world markets. To achieve this, Filipinos must improve and lower the cost of their products through increased skill and scientific knowledge, through labor-saving devices, through utilization of by-products, through inventive ingenuity along a thousand different lines.

The solution of their economic problem will be a thorny and difficult task. It is not insoluble. American ingenuity and technical skill will be at the call of the Filipinos to help in the solution.

Last June Congress passed a Joint Resolution (S. J. Res. 94) creating a Filipino Rehabilitation Commission, composed of an equal number of Americans and Filipinos, to "investigate all matters affecting post-war economy, trade, finance, economic stability and rehabilitation of the Philippine Islands" and "to formulate recommendations based upon such investigations and for future trade rela-

tions between the United States and the independent Philippine Republic when established."

Because the present economic dependence of the Filipinos upon the United States is largely of our own making, and because it is to our own interest to build for future stability in the Pacific, the Filipino people must be given their independence under such conditions as will assure them sound economic foundations for their future. The American people will not be content with anything less.

6

THERE remains the question of United States naval and air bases in the Philippines. The Independence Act of 1934 authorized the President of the United States to acquire or retain "naval reservations" in the Philippines, and the Joint Resolution of 1944 (S. J. Res. 93) authorized the President to withhold or to acquire such bases, in addition to any provided for in the Act of 1934, "as he may deem necessary for the full and mutual protection of the Philippine Islands and of the United States."

It is not a question of a great power for its own interests imposing its will by might upon a small, unwilling nation. The responsible leaders of the Commonwealth Government want the United States to retain bases in the Philippines. They know that an American base in the Islands would have to be protected by American armed forces; and that, modern warfare being what it is, protection of the base would involve protection of the entire Philippine archipelago. From the point of view of the Philippines, the grant of a naval or air base is a cheap price with which to buy protection by the most powerful navy in the world against foreign aggression.

The real question is whether the United States desires to acquire such bases at such a cost. The answer depends in part on the issue of what is to be the future role of the United States in world affairs and particularly in the Pacific. Are we henceforth to draw into our own continental orbit and seek to avoid all involvements in the Far East, or are we to continue as a great Pacific power, playing an active, decisive part in the Far East? The present course of international events in reality leaves us no choice.

The world has become a unity. Twentieth-century conditions force either participation in world activities or else atrophy and extinction. The day of "magnificent isolation" is past. The United States is compelled, irrespective of its desires, to play an active part in the Pacific and in the Far East or cease to be a great power.

The peoples of the world today are interlocked economically, socially, politically. China needs American goods. The United States in the post-war world will need Chinese markets if we are to keep our men at work. The same is true of Australia, of New Zealand, of Malaya, of the Philippines. People cannot sell without buying. Trade is a two-way process. In our twentieth-century closely integrated world, ignorance or backward conditions or disease in any one spot vitally endangers all. If we accept that view, what follows? Should the United States establish naval or air bases in the Philippines?

However, the answer transcends the Philippine problem. It relates in part to the kind of international organization for maintaining world security which will emerge from the present war.

If the post-war world is to be built again upon the outlived nineteenth-century system of competing, rival sovereignties and a continually teetering, ever precarious balance of power, then the United States will inevitably continue to seek its own security through its own armies and navy and air power; and it will want its own naval and air bases in those parts of the world where fighting is likely to break out. So will every other great power. If that is to be the course which we and other great powers follow in the post-war world, the retention of powerful Philippine naval and air bases will not save us. For the whole world will then be following the pathway to disaster.

If, on the other hand, the post-war world is to be built upon modern reality; if the United Nations join in setting up a world organization built upon the coöperative effort of all to advance human welfare, to elevate standards of living, and to enforce a common rule of justice and law in place of strong-armed international savagery, the Philippines cease to be an international problem. The independent Philippines then become an outpost in the Pacific for the enforcement of international order in the interest of world security.

It is against this background that the matter of naval and air bases in the Philippines must be considered. The maintenance of justice and law, whether by national or international organizations, requires armed forces. Some strong Philippine base will probably be necessary for the maintenance of order in the post-war world. The vital issue is whether henceforth bases such as these will be held by individual nations, owing responsibility to no one in order to protect and further their own selfish interests, or whether they will be held by or for the world community in order to protect and maintain an organized peace.

The days of imperialism are numbered. Stable peace cannot rest on any system of alien govern-

ment based upon exploitation. This applies to every country and to every race, white, yellow, brown, or black. The only possible basis for an enduring civilization is equality of human rights, regardless of race or creed or color. The Atlantic Charter is as applicable to the Pacific as it is to the Atlantic. Humanity knows no geographical bounds.

Pacific peoples no less than Atlantic peoples have the right "to choose the form of government under which they will live." Pacific peoples no less than Atlantic peoples are entitled to "access, on equal terms, to the trade and to the raw materials of the world which are needed for their economic prosperity."

In the light of these fundamentals the program of the United States in the Philippines assumes fairly distinct outlines. Our first step obviously is to drive the Japanese invaders from the Islands.

Second, we must thereupon establish the complete independence of the Philippine Islands as a separate and self-governing nation.

Third, the United States and the new Philippine government must work out some practicable program for the winning of economic independence. The United States is morally bound to assist the Filipinos in finding a way to achieve independence without economic shipwreck. But continuing free entry for Philippine goods to the protected American market offers no solution.

Fourth, the Filipino people will emerge from the war economically stunned, with many of their properties in ruin. The United States will want to help them to their feet with assistance in the most constructive form possible.

Fifth, the United States and the Philippine nation must unite in working out common security measures, if possible with the other United Nations. Such measures will presumably include the establishment of naval and air bases in order to protect and maintain the world's peace in the Pacific.

The eyes of the world, and particularly of every people in Asia, are upon the Philippines. The measure of American influence for good in the Far East for years to come will depend largely upon the wisdom and the sincerity of American conduct in the Philippines.

In 1776, America in the Western world struck out along a new pathway for democracy and human freedom. Her achievement forms one of the shining chapters in human history. In the months and the years ahead America has the chance to assist in writing a new chapter in human progress and freedom in the Far East. What is written will depend in large part upon the outcome of the Philippine adventure.

WALK THROUGH TWO LANDSCAPES

For E. M. S.

by DILYS BENNETT LAING

WE WALKED together in two different landscapes
sharply refracted through two temperaments.
My scene was huge — compared with yours, austere
and spare of nouns: a study in planes of color,
olive and ivory and violet
slipping away in squeezing parallels,
in long arcs of leave-taking from the eye.

My landscape was a spectrum of my dream
of time and magnitude, and of that point, myself,
that has position but no magnitude.
It was the frail projection of a thought
that for a half-convincing moment filled
the cupped panes of the eyes, the brain's small theater.

And yours: you walked fastidiously. You saw
with eyes half clinical, half amorous,
the intimate anatomy of a season.
Out of the sleeves of summer you perceived
small birds to fly, or what to me were birds,
but what you saw with more particular sight
were waxwing, grosbeak, bobolink or lark,
crested or capped, and whether cock or hen.

For you, no planes of ivory, olive, mauve,
but mouse-moved wheat and siskin-shaken pine,
orchis, erigeron, vervain or vetch.
You stubbed your toe on detail at each step,
and each encounter reinforced your faith
that earth was no illusion, but a fact
older than knowledge, solid beyond sense.
Uneasy in my abstract universe,
I felt my dearth of fact as a defect,
my vision nakedness; yours, rich insignia.

A hundred things occurred in every inch
sprung of their hundred words. A microscope
lived in your pupils. You divined a seed
whole, as I guessed a world, and from that package
unwrapped a tree as I let loose a system.



BENJIE

by CLARA LAIDLAW

HIYA, Miss Conway. Nice mornin’,” called a friendly, piping voice one morning, the Wednesday of my first week of teaching in Michewasca.

I looked up from my lesson plans, and there, beaming at me through a crack in the door, was a little round face — the face of a cherub out of a Renaissance painting, only bronze-black.

I said, “Good morning, fellow. How are you?”

“O.K., Miss Conway!” he chanted mischievously, and then disappeared like Alice’s Cheshire cat, leaving his grin behind him quite tangibly.

“Now who’s that happy little pickaninny?” I asked myself.

That night as I was leaving the building, the heavy outer door began opening before me, apparently of its own volition. I glanced down, and there was my black cherub grinning, his little shoulders braced against the big door.

“Night, Miss Conway,” he chirped.

“Thank you,” I said, patting his kinky black head as he ducked and giggled, “but how do you know my name?”

“Me?” he asked, chuckling. “Oh! Me! Why, I know ever’body, and I just go ever’place,” and he added, as if it explained everything, “I’m Benjie Bailey.”

He let the big door fall shut behind us and came loping along at my side.

“Well, Benjie Bailey,” I said, looking down at him, “it looks as though we are going to be friends.”

“Sure does, Miss Conway,” he said, and then, suddenly shy, he ran away.

I looked after the little fellow, warmed and cheered by his friendliness, and after that I mentioned Benjie several times to the few people I knew. From their various replies, I pieced together a pleasant picture of the isolated Negro family, Benjie’s people, unassuming, honest, God-fearing folk, who had won and kept the respect and affection of these Northern people, and were accepted apparently without reservation as citizens and neighbors and friends.

It was a good and heart-warming picture my white friends made me see. Yet, except for what I saw of him from time to time around school, I knew no more at first hand of Benjie Bailey or of his background than I had known that first day, until one night in early January.

Fresh snow had fallen that day, and the town looked new-created, veiled in white velvet. I thoroughly enjoyed myself that night after dinner. I doubt that there was a back street in Michewasca on which I did not set foot. The stars came out and the moon, and the new whiteness shone with a thousand thousand jewels; and still I tramped, oblivious to the cold — indeed to everything but my delight in the snow.

That is, I kept on until suddenly I became conscious that I was lost. I circled several blocks, feeling as if I had been transported bodily into a strange town. My eyes, stung by the sharp night wind, filled

A schoolteacher of Michigan, CLARA LAIDLAW made her first appearance in the *Atlantic* in December, 1942, with her memorable short story, “The Little Black Boys.” The story has been widely reprinted, and in recognition of it the author received one of the O. Henry Awards.

with tears, and the tears froze on my lashes. I began to feel very cold. Just then I heard a voice call, "Hiya, Miss Conway. Where you going?"

I turned and there was Benjie halfway down the block, his round little face in its encircling snow-helmet beaming darkly in the bright moonlight. He waved one mittened hand. The other was occupied in pulling a sled.

"Going?" I said, trying unsuccessfully to keep my teeth from chattering. "I'm trying to go home. I seem to be lost."

"Hoh! No, ma'am. You ain't lost," he said and then shouted with laughter. "You're just 'round the corner from the Soo Line depot."

"Am I?" I said helplessly, holding my cold, kid-gloved hands to my colder ears. "Where's that?"

"Why, that's just across from my grampa's shop," Benjie said with the air of locating us beyond the shadow of any doubt. "You just come with me, Miss Conway," he counseled. "I'll take care of you. Sure is cold," he added, clapping his mittened hands together and stamping.

We rounded the corner, bending against the piercing north wind, and Benjie galloped briskly ahead through the snow toward the one lighted shop on the dark street, his sled careening recklessly after him. I followed more gingerly, for my feet felt half-frozen. As I passed, I peered in through the frosted plate-glass to the lighted shopwindow with its clean white curtains at the back, its display of sugar-coated cookies, crisp brown fried cakes, and one immense devil's-food cake with luscious-looking boiled frosting coated with a thin film of dark chocolate. "Eatery and Bakery," said the legend on the window.

Benjie threw open the door, making the little bell above it tinkle. "Come on in, Miss Conway," he called proudly, holding the door for me.

In answer to the tinkling of the bell, a very old Negro man came through a curtained doorway, walking with stiff energy, his frail back a little bent.

"This is my grampa," said Benjie, looking as if he'd burst with pride. "Grampa, this is that one I told you about — Miss Conway."

"Evening, ma'am," the old man said courteously.

"Miss Conway's come to get warmed up 'fore I show her how to get home," Benjie explained importantly, hauling a big chair over to the rosy-windowed old coal-stove for me.

"What you need, ma'am," said the old man, a coaxing note in his cracked voice, "is a n-nice hot cup of tea. Benjie, go tell your gramma."

Benjie ran into the back room and was back almost before he had left.

"Gramma says that tea'll be here in just two shakes of a lamb's tail," he reported.

The tea came, a steaming cupful, borne by an old Negro woman, who peered curiously at me over the cup, her silver-rimmed glasses resting halfway to the end of her short nose.

I drank the tea, and after a while, when I had stopped shivering, I began to pay more attention to the spotless shop and to Benjie's folks. There was a tenderness between the old Negro couple and the little boy, a mutual pride that was good to see.

As we were leaving, Benjie eager to show me the way home, I drew out my purse to pay for the tea, but Benjie's grandmother waved it away.

"You was our Benjie's company," she said firmly, wrinkling her nose to hold the glasses in place so that she could look up into my face. "It wouldn't be nice for you to pay."

On the way home Benjie's chatter stilled a moment. "I wish," he said at last, his little face very serious, "I wish you knew my mom, too," and he added, looking up at me coaxingly, "My mom is awful nice."

"I'm sure she is, Benjie," I said, patting his shoulder.

2

WHEN I went again to the shop of Benjie's folks, it was with the hope that I should meet Mary Bailey there. Benjie, dressed for outdoors, met me at the shop door.

"Mom!" he yelled, not taking time to greet me but snatching his snow-helmet off his cropped black head hurriedly, "Mom, come quick. Miss Conway's here."

As his mother entered and Benjie was mumbling a beaming introduction, impatient boy-voices were calling him. He ignored them, watching his mother proudly, scuffing one overshoed foot against the base of the counter in embarrassed but rapturous pleasure. The impatient voices grew louder, and Benjie lifted one black eyebrow in their direction.

"Guess I got to go," he said reluctantly. "Don't you leave, Miss Conway, till I come back. Got to build a snow fort."

He dashed out, and a moment later we could see him outside the window, in company with four rosy-cheeked white youngsters.

I turned back then to Benjie's mother. There was a fine-drawn beauty about Mary Bailey's thin, black face, a depth in her clear eyes that I felt I had known would be there. When she smiled after the boy, her expressive, friendly eyes lighted up like Benjie's and two fine lines on either side of her mouth

deepened. Those sharp lines in her young face made me pause and wonder.

From outdoors a joyous shout came to our ears, and we both smiled, recognizing Benjie's laughter.

"He's the happiest child I've ever known," I said, impulsively.

I was unprepared for the naked seriousness of her deep eyes when she looked at me.

"I think he is," she said at last earnestly, her voice sounding like a prayer. "Oh, he is. I pray he'll always be as happy."

Her words hung in the air for a long moment after they had been spoken. The things she didn't say spoke in the silence eloquently, as only unspoken words can speak, and for the first time in my life I realized in more than an intellectual way the struggle of the worthy, the sensitive black woman or man for a full and happy life in the shadow of the dangling sword of prejudice.

The moment passed and she smiled again as her son and his friends, snow-covered, burst in to invite us to view the world's finest snow fort. I went away soon after, though Benjie's wet, mittened hand clung to mine, holding me back from going.

On the way home and often thereafter, I kept thinking of the picture, the pretty, comfortable picture my white friends had painted for me — that picture of the little Negro family living in amity and respect with their white neighbors; that picture that should everywhere be real, but was not always so. How fine, I thought, if only here in this quiet town the human spirit could come into its own — that here men and women could be judged as people and not as either white or black.

The old folks died that next winter, just two days apart. Benjie came into my homeroom the week after the funeral and stood quietly listening while I told him how sorry I was. He kept looking up at my face, his eyes fixed on mine unblinkingly, while the tears rolled unheeded down his round cheeks.

"My grampa would of been glad that you and everybody came," he said at last seriously, controlling the tremor of his lips, "and my gramma would of liked all the flowers."

He stood for a moment, remembering. Then he asked tremulously, "People liked my grampa and gramma, didn't they?"

"Yes," I said. "They were good people, Benjie."

It seemed as simple as that.

3

I WATCHED Benjie come up through junior high and into senior high, and he was still Benjie — cherub

grin, puppy-dog friendliness, round bronze-black little-boy face.

When he entered my English class in his senior year, we had long been friends. He was an excellent student, besides being named All Upper Peninsula quarterback, too, in his junior year.

Everyone, teachers and students alike, loved Benjie, so no one was much surprised when the senior class, with magnificent unanimity, elected him class president. Yet Benjie in his senior year was still a little boy in many ways, for all his six-foot height and his sixteen years.

"Golly, Miss Conway," he said, returning the third book he had attempted to read for a book report, "haven't you got something without any of that slushy love-stuff in it? Gosh, a fellow isn't interested in reading that stuff all the time — none of the fellows I know are."

I looked up at him, suspecting irony, but Benjie was quite serious and honest-eyed about it.

We went down to the library together and began looking through the stacks for a book for Benjie.

"Have you ever read this?" I asked him, reaching up to the top shelf and handing him a copy of Booker T. Washington's *Up from Slavery*.

"No, ma'am," he said, taking it and opening it curiously. "What's it about?"

"It's about one of the greatest men of your race who ever lived, Benjie," I said, wondering just what his attitude toward his ancestry was.

He looked up, his wide eyes sparkling, his round black nose shining. "Sounds good," he said, "but he'd have to go some to be greater than my grampa. You remember my grampa, Miss Conway?"

"Of course I do, Benjie," I said. "He was a fine old man."

"Sure," he said, dismissing my praise as too obvious to matter. "My gramma, too. They were pretty nice folks. Did you know my grampa left me money so I could go to college?"

"Why, Benjie," I said, surprised, "that's fine. Why didn't you tell me before? Have you been taking the right courses so that you can enter?"

"I guess so," he said unconcernedly. "My grampa left me a letter, too — did I tell you? He said in it he never had any chance to get an education himself so he wanted me to go to college. 'And you be sure and finish, Benjie,' he said. 'No matter what, you finish. Don't you ever start anything and not go through with it. And be a good boy, Benjie.' Golly, he was swell, Miss Conway."

"Indeed he was," I agreed. "Well, Benjie, now I know your grandfather would have liked you to read this book. Better take it."

"Would he have, honestly, Miss Conway?" he asked seriously, his candid eyes searching my face.

"Honestly," I nodded.

So Benjie Bailey took *Up from Slavery* home to read. He came tearing into my homeroom the next Monday afternoon on his way to football practice.

"Can I make an oral report fifth period tomorrow, Miss Conway, please?" he panted, standing on one leg half inside the door to indicate his haste.

"Yes, you may," I said.

"Oh, sure. May I?" he corrected himself, grinning at me.

I assented, and he dashed out, his courteous "Thanks" floating through the door to me after he himself was out of sight.

The Benjie who came in my free period the next day was outwardly calm and deliberate, but one look into his eyes told me he was consumed with an inner, controlled excitement.

"Miss Conway," he said explosively.

I smiled, looking up from my desk and motioning for him to pull up a chair. He seemed not to see my gesture but continued to walk back and forth in front of the tables.

"Miss Conway," he repeated, "I want to say — to say 'Thanks.'"

He paused then and did pull a chair over and sit down. "For recommending that book," he added, in explanation. "Miss Conway, that book's changed my whole outlook on life."

"Has it, Benjie?" I said, straightening the row of books on my desk and wondering why I didn't feel like smiling at his bombast.

"Yes, it has," he said, positively. "I was just a fool kid before. Now I know what I want to do in life." He looked at me, beaming confidently. "I'm going to be a lawyer, Miss Conway, a good one, and work to make conditions better for my people. I'm proud to belong to a race that has had men in it like this man."

He touched the book, not taking his eyes off mine. I nodded, smiling at his enthusiasm.

"Listen," he commanded excitedly, raising one pale-nailed finger in admonition. "Listen to this. It's on page 281 — I memorized the page, anyhow." He began leafing through the book. "Here it is." He bent over the book earnestly, one black finger tracing the lines. "'When a Negro girl learns to cook, to wash dishes, to sew, to write a book, or a Negro boy learns to groom horses, or to grow sweet potatoes, or to produce butter, or to build a house, or to be able to practise medicine, as well or better than someone else, they will be rewarded regardless of race or colour.'"

There must have been the shadow of doubt in my

face when he finished reading and looked up, for he said urgently, "You believe that, too, don't you, Miss Conway? Don't you?"

I hesitated for a second, and he went on, almost stammering in his earnestness. "I guess you're thinking most of those things Mr. Washington says we can do are — are — sort of common things."

I shook my head slightly, for that had not been my thought, but he didn't notice.

"Well, I thought so too, at first, but it's all one piece with what he says all through about being proud of working, of having something you can do good — I mean, well. See, here he says again —" Benjie indicated another passage in the book and read: "I think that the whole future of my race hinges on the question as to whether or not it can make itself of such indispensable value that the people in the town and the state where we reside will feel that our presence is necessary to the happiness and well-being of the community."

He looked up and his eyes suddenly brightened with tears. "That was my grampa," he said simply.

"Yes," I said, "that was your grandpa, Benjie. And that can be you, too, if you get to be that 'good lawyer' you said you were going to be. How well prepared are you to go to college?"

From then on, the "book report" consisted mostly of checking on Benjie's desires and qualifications to follow in the footsteps of Booker T. Washington, of an analysis of schools and universities which would contribute most to Benjie's future training, and of a discussion of just how much Benjie's high school courses, past and present, had contributed toward preparing him for his college career.

When I questioned him about speech training, Benjie looked rather sheepish. "I sort of side-stepped that, Miss Conway," he admitted, looking ashamed. "I'm just practically petrified when I have to talk out loud."

"If you're going to be a lawyer, don't you think you'll need it?" I asked.

"I suppose so," he said reluctantly, "but here it's most November. Isn't it too late to change? Gosh, and I can't drop any of my other subjects. I need them all, too."

"You could go out for oration," I suggested. "You're good at writing themes, and I'll help you with the technique of speaking even if you're not in speech class. That is, if you want me to help you."

"Do I?" he said earnestly. "Golly, Miss Conway, would you really?"

"You get a subject and start writing, and I'll be here to help when you strike a snag."

"Gosh, thanks. Thanks. 'Bye."

He dashed out of the classroom, only to thrust his round black face in again a moment later with a gesture which made me think of the happy little pickaninny of six years before.

"Gee, Miss Conway, I forgot. Was that book report O.K.?"

"It was 'O.K.," I said, smiling.

4

BENJIE'S oration, "The Coming War and the American Negro," — it was 1940, — won first place in our district of the Upper Peninsula. Benjie brought home the University of Michigan banner for first honors in oratory, and we had a big ceremony the next day in assembly, with Benjie presenting the banner to the school. He was still "petrified to talk out loud," for he shifted nervously back and forth from foot to foot when they got him up there in the front of the assembly-room stage. I wondered a bit anxiously if the blue and gold felt of the banner would withstand the punishment Benjie's nervous fingers were giving it.

"Well, kids — and teachers," he said, grinning in embarrassment, "I don't know how it happened, but here it is."

He thrust out the banner toward them. The students clapped enthusiastically.

"Don't you kids clap for me," Benjie said earnestly, after he had motioned for them to stop. "It was all Miss Conway. She said, 'Benjie, that piece of wall there over the door would look awfully nice draped with a blue and gold banner for oratory.' So I went and got it for her."

The students almost brought down the roof, and nothing would do but I must go up on the stage, too, and shake hands with Benjie. After I had stepped down again, they called for Benjie to make a speech.

"Gosh, I can't, kids," he said candidly. "Unless I have Miss Conway help me practice a lot, I can't say a thing. I guess I'm just a Svengali."

I laughed to myself, remembering that Benjie, when he had reported on, of all books, *Trilby*, had insisted upon calling the hypnotist Trilby and the heroine Svengali. Error is strong and will prevail, in spite of English teachers.

Even his success in public speaking didn't seem to lose Benjie any friends, which is an unusual thing. Every once in a while I had to listen to a panegyric on the good qualities of Benjie Bailey from boys and girls alike, as when Teresa Malone began to sing his praises one day after school.

Teresa was a pretty little sophomore, with an Irish charm and wit, a saucy blue eye, and crisp

black curls. Now she leaned dreamily over the front desk and gazed out of the window, her profile to me. Her elbows were planted on the desk-top and her round little posterior was outlined against her silk jersey skirt.

"Miss Conway, I think Benjie Bailey is the nicest boy in Michewasca," she said, quite irrelevantly. We had just been talking about Silas Marner's finding Eppie in "de tole hole."

"So?" I said, smiling. "And what did Silas do to Eppie, then?"

Teresa wriggled her flat little tummy along the desk-top and then pushed herself upright on her palms.

"I feel so sorry for him, though," she said, looking at me earnestly. "He's so — so sort of all alone. I wish everyone would be twice as nice to him because he's so alone."

"Alone!" I said, laughing. "Why, Benjie's never alone."

"But yes, he is, Miss Conway," she insisted seriously. "Oh, he's got loads of school friends, and everybody likes him, and he's president of his class and everything — but he's alone just the same."

She was standing very straight now, clasping her hands tightly together in her earnestness.

"Because he's — different?" I said. "Yes, I suppose you're right, Teresa. I've never thought of Benjie's being exactly lonely, though — Benjie, of all people."

I watched him sometimes after that, wondering if he himself realized what Teresa's sensitive spirit had divined of the isolation of his position. I had grown so used to seeing that one black face among the crowd of white faces that I felt something of a shock in really seeing the difference now with eyes made freshly aware. He was, indeed, alone in an undeniable sense, though I could not believe that he himself was conscious of that loneliness. Surrounded by "school friends," as Teresa had called them, he did not seem aware that full friendship went beyond what he had, beyond what he could ever have here among an alien people, however friendly they might be.

I felt a little stab of fear for the time that must inevitably come when Benjie would awaken into full consciousness of his isolation.

5

IT WAS late May. The days of Benjie's senior year were drawing to a close and Commencement week was approaching. But first came the Senior Ball. Benjie, with characteristic thoughtfulness, had appointed himself chairman of the decorating com-

mittee, since he was unwilling to ask anyone else to work harder than he did himself.

The afternoon of the ball, I went down to the gym to see how matters were progressing. Benjie, his face shiny and warm, beamed at my praises.

"Hope everything looks as nice tonight with the lights and things," he said, turning to survey the rose and white ropes of crepe paper strung in intricate designs about the gym. "I'm bringing my mom just to see how pretty it looks. I told her and she said it sounded just like fairyland."

He grinned, a little shamefaced, but proud in spite of himself.

"Be sure to bring your mother over to see me tonight, Benjie," I said. "It's been years since I've talked with her."

"Gosh, thanks, Miss Conway," he said. "I sure will."

Under the rosy lights, the gym that night was like a child's dream of fairyland. There was a sleepy quality about it, made up of the dim lights, the rather overpowering beat of the not too good local orchestra, the monotonous swishing of dancing feet on the waxed floor, the weaving in and out of multi-colored formals on the slim little bodies of school-girls on whom anklets and knee-length dresses were the expected things, so that they all seemed to be masquerading as grown-up young ladies.

Neil Allen, the science teacher, and I danced for a while and then went to sit down near the door. Neil mopped his forehead and departed in search of "something to cool us off." While he was gone, Benjie and Mary Bailey appeared in the gym door.

Mary was in a street dress. There was a whispered conference, during which Mary started to withdraw shyly and Benjie caught her impulsively by the sleeve. I rose and went over to them.

"She won't come in," Benjie said, "because she hasn't got on a long dress."

I pointed out several of the older ladies on the side lines who were not wearing formals, and finally persuaded Mary Bailey to come in and sit down.

Benjie stood behind us, pointing out to his mother the details of the decorations, beaming proudly at our praise of his handiwork. In the rosy gloom the dancing couples floated by obliviously, each in its little world of pleasant motion and engrossing sound. Benjie watched them in obvious pleasure, his eyes dancing in elation as if the dancers were themselves a part of his design. His feet moved in time to the music.

"There's Arne and Teresa," he said, and we watched the couple dance toward us, the boy blond and tall, Teresa small and darkly pretty in her bright blue formal.

Just opposite us, she turned her head and saw Benjie. Quite unaffectedly she grinned and waved a friendly hand. She said something to Arne, because he too looked over at Benjie, smiled, and made an approving gesture that took in the whole scene.

Mary Bailey saw and understood what came next before I did. I was looking at her and saw her face stiffen and her eyes shine with a wild fear.

"Benjie," she said. "Don't! Oh, don't!"

The music flowed over her voice and obliterated it, but the sound of it made me look up. Benjie was moving among the dancers, his black face shining with friendliness. He was tapping Arne's shoulder and saying something to Arne and Teresa. The whole scene seemed frozen, though the music went on and on. Arne, Teresa, Benjie, all stood still as statues, like the still photograph coming suddenly after the motion picture ceases to move.

Around them several other couples stopped and seemed frozen too, in the rosy dimness. Arne said something then, for his lips moved, soundlessly it seemed. His arm went out in the half-light, and Benjie stumbled back against two other boys standing behind him. Arne caught at Teresa quickly, and they danced away, Teresa's face white and frightened-looking as her eyes followed Benjie and the two boys who were walking one on each side of him, seeming to expostulate with him as he hurried through the dancing crowd and out the gym door.

It had all happened so quickly that few saw or knew that anything had taken place. Mary Bailey's mouth quivered, and she raised an unsteady hand to it in a vague, lost way. After a second she rose, motioned for me not to follow her, and started toward the door. The two boys who had walked with Benjie met her coming in. They stood aside courteously to let her pass, a queer noncommittal hardness making their faces like masks.

That was all.

Only Benjie didn't come back to school the next week, nor the week after that. Our seniors don't take final examinations, so Benjie could still graduate — that is, if he would come back.

6

IT WAS the afternoon before Commencement that I went up the street leading to the little shop. Mary Bailey started when, answering the tinkling bell, she saw me standing by the counter. For a moment she hesitated and then motioned toward the inner room.

"He's — in there," she whispered.

Benjie was sitting in front of the window staring

out, a book held in his hands almost as if he were caressing it. He must have thought I was his mother coming in, for he didn't turn or speak. For a moment I stood looking down at him, at his good black face shining with cleanness and honesty.

I put my hand on his shoulder. "I want you to come back, Benjie," I said softly. "I've brought your cap and gown. I want you to come back tonight."

"Miss Conway!" he cried, jumping to his feet. "Miss Conway."

He stopped as if something had choked up in him so that he could scarcely speak.

"Come back?" he asked, his voice sounding strangled and thin.

"Yes, Benjie," I said, sounding more calm and assured than I felt.

He stared at me a moment and then, turning sharply, he strode toward the window. When he spoke at last, his back was still toward me.

"I can't. Not after —"

He stopped, and I waited. At last he turned and faced me, his eyes unnaturally wide and shining.

"Miss Conway, Arne Sjostrom — he said I had no right to ask Teresa to dance with me. He said because I was — I was black, I had no right."

He stood looking at me for vindication, bright indignation blazing in his eyes.

"But I had, Miss Conway," he said, positive urgency in his voice. "I had, hadn't I? Just like anybody else?"

The moments ticked away in silence while his eyes held mine unwaveringly.

Slowly I shook my head.

He said queerly, "You mean — ?"

When I did not speak, he swallowed hard and went on, "You mean — Arne was right?"

I nodded.

"Why?" he said faintly, bewildered. "Why?"

Then louder, almost angrily, "But I don't feel any different from other people. None of you ever made me feel — alone before."

"Benjie." My voice rang sharply in my own ears as I spoke, but I didn't want him to go on, to say what would hurt us both later, remembering. "Sit down," I added, motioning toward the chair.

With automatic obedience he drew the chair nearer me and sat down. His eyes, when he looked up at me, were clouded, but deep in them I felt some part of the old faith.

"Benjie," I said, "you know I am fond of you."

He nodded, swallowing again.

"You know I would not hurt you for the world?"

"You've always been awful good to me, Miss Conway," he said with sincerity.

"I'm going to be honest with you, Benjie," I said, fear crackling within me like electricity, for I felt my own lack of sufficient wisdom to see the problem straight and to make him see. "I'm going to be as honest with you as I know how to be."

His eyes questioned me.

"Arne is right," I said. "I can't tell you why. I don't even know why, but he's right, Benjie."

"But, Miss Conway," he protested. "I'm just folks — I've always been just folks. Nobody ever — ever shut me out before. I never felt — different before."

"But you are different, Benjie," I said as gently as I could, my heart misgiving me for my conscious cruelty. "In many ways there is a wall, a wall without a door, between you and your world — the people of this town — even your friends. The only way you can be free of that wall is to see it, accept it, and build your life over and around it. It's — it's like the Bible says, that he who loses his life shall find it."

"I don't understand," he said, frowning.

"If you won't see the wall," I said, desperately trying to make him understand, "you dash yourself against it. You bruise yourself. But see it, accept it, and you can forget it."

"How can I," he asked, his voice edged with bitterness, "when I know now what you — what they all think of me?"

I watched him as he stood up, his bronze-black face hard, the little-boy roundness grown set and resentful.

"What is it the Constitution says?" he asked with bitter irony. "Something about there being no discrimination against anyone because of race, color, or previous condition of servitude?" He looked at me, but there seemed no trust in his eyes any more.

"Doesn't that mean anything, Miss Conway? Did it ever mean anything, Miss Conway?"

"You ought to know, Benjie," I said, a little sharply. "Has anyone ever — ?"

"No," he said, looking at me, his eyes like black steel. "Nobody until now."

The silence seemed to lengthen out around us, queerly empty yet disturbed in its lack of sound, like the echoing silence in the heart of a shell.

And then suddenly Benjie's face changed, broke, and he was crying, standing there, his big hands hanging helplessly, the tears rolling down out of his open eyes as they had that other time when he had been a little boy and his grandparents had died.

When Benjie Bailey marched into the big auditorium and up onto the raised platform, the last of

the long line of graduates in their black caps and gowns, there was a sudden indrawing of breath and turning of heads in the audience. The story of what had happened at the ball had spread. Benjie's face, stern and drawn, grew even more still at the sound of that involuntary sigh, but he mounted the steps steadily and took his place, baring his cropped, kinky head as the minister began the invocation.

There was a spattering of applause as each graduate came forward to receive his diploma. The clapping for the captain of the football team exceeded by only a little the hearty round of applause for the charming little valedictorian. The line moved along slowly. The audience grew a little tired of clapping, and the pattering of applause grew fainter.

"Benjie Bailey," droned the principal.

Benjie stepped hastily forward, his robe ballooning out behind him. He removed his cap. I could see from my seat how a muscle in his black cheek twitched and pulled. There was a moment of complete stillness as the president of the board of education put the diploma in his hand while Benjie, bowing gravely, thanked him.

And then it came. With the same involuntary unity that had marked the sigh of surprise at his entrance, the audience and Benjie's classmates all at once burst into a bedlam of applause. The ovations for the valedictorian and the football captain were mild in comparison with this. People stood up in the audience and clapped and stamped.

Through a film of tears I could see the strain and the stiffness leave Benjie's face, and the fire of an almost unbelieving hope begin to blaze in his eyes. As he stumbled back to his seat, boys clapped him on the back and Arne Sjostrom rose to shake his hand.

7

I DON'T believe that Benjie, or any of us, quite understood from what depths and out of what emotions that ovation arose. Even now I'm not sure, but somehow I think Benjie got close to understanding it in the last letter I had from him.

He had been with his regiment in England for several months, and this letter was written from there only a few days before what was to be D Day. We haven't heard much from him since. Still, no news is good news, we say.

Whether Benjie comes back or not, it seems to me significant — significant, and somehow imperative — for us to know that just before he went across — before all of them went — he was concerned about,

not the days of danger immediately ahead, but what home was going to be like after it was all over.

Thanks for the copy of *Up from Slavery* you sent me. It's great stuff, and means plenty to me. You know how much, I guess.

There's one place especially, where Mr. Washington says, "The wisest among my race understand that the agitation of questions of social equality is the extremest folly, and that progress in the enjoyment of all the privileges that will come to us must be the result of severe and constant struggle rather than of artificial forcing."

That's sense, Miss Conway. If you've got something honestly coming to you, folks are pretty fine about giving it without you having to ask. I'm the one that knows that for sure. I wish Mr. Washington was alive today to show us what to do. There wouldn't be so much fool shouting for rights, and then there'd be more quiet honoring of folks that were worthy of honor. At least, that's what he'd say, seems to me.

The English here are fine to us Negro soldiers. They treat us just like the folks back home in Michewasca treated me. Some of the boys couldn't get used to it, but it seemed natural for me. Sure we're all just people.

I've been thinking a lot of when I come back, and of the sort of life I want to make then. From what I can see so far, Miss Conway, the big real things, like kindness and neighborliness and — don't laugh — beauty, haven't anything to do with the sort of walls we talked about. I don't seem to be able to say it the way I feel it, but, Miss Conway, I want a life that's big, that's up there so clear and high that walls look like the stone fences between the fields you see sometimes in England when you go up on a hill and look down.

Everything seems to flatten out, like my grandma's patchwork quilt, and you can see the fences between the fields like the featherstitching my grandma used to do between the blocks. The fences are still there, the walls are still there, but when you're high up you can see that they aren't so much, compared to the whole thing. Over there are the big fields stretching out, and the walls are just thin lines between. Down low, those stone walls look awful broad and firm, but not when you're up high.

I don't mean the walls aren't there, Miss Conway. I know they are, mine and the fields', and I'm glad you made me see mine and made me grow that much in seeing.

But I want to live my life on the high places and see things, how they compare to each other right. I want such a life that I don't need to say, "I have to do this because there's a wall in front of me, because I'm black," but "I do this because I'm Benjie Bailey, because I'm me."

I don't know if I can have that sort of a life. I don't know. But when this thing is over and I come home again, wish me luck, Miss Conway, because I'm going to try.

Thanks for everything.

Your old student,

BENJIE BAILEY

FARRAGO

by ROBERT HILLYER

IN DE QUINCEY'S wonderfully eloquent reminiscences of the English Lake Poets, which are less known than his other works, yet are in my opinion the best and most sustained effort of all, there is an abundance of happy *obiter dicta*. Speaking of Dorothy Wordsworth's exile from the ranks of the blue-stockings, he points out, as an example, her ignorance of Fénelon, and in a footnote adds: —

“Calypso ne savoit se consoler du départ’ etc. For how long a period (*viz.* nearly two centuries) has a Calypso been inconsolable in the studies of young ladies! As Fénelon's most dreary romance always opened at one or other of these three earliest and dreary pages, naturally to my sympathetic fancy the poor unhappy goddess seemed to be eternally aground on this Goodwin sound of inconsolability. It is amongst the standing hypocrisies of the world that most people affect a reverence for this book, which nobody reads.” Substitute for Fénelon about half the authors, ancient and modern, to be found on any college reading list, and you will note that the hypocrisy continues unabated. Or consider the thousands of volumes purchased to grace a living-room table that have no place in the mental furniture.

On the whole, French literature has not had a good effect on the English. La Rochefoucauld did not have the English language in mind, however Oscar Wilde and T. S. Eliot may have thought of him as a fellow author. The genius of the two languages is completely different. English depends on a large margin of interpretation; French narrows it down to almost nothing. Consequently, writers in the English tongue, when predominantly influenced by the French, become merely obscure; and French authors, influenced by the English, misplace

their caesuras. “In Xanadu did Kubla Khan” is just as untranslatable into French as “Dieu, que le son du cor” is untranslatable into English. Sir Thomas Urquhart, in his translation of Rabelais, made the nearest marriage, but English so tempted him with its profusion that he outdid his original.

Concerning prose style, I frequently find myself out of sympathy with the bulk of critical opinion. For example, the prose of John Bunyan seems to me boorish and coarse (irrespective of the story, which, if analyzed, will be found to be a mass of sadism and inconsistency). Those who compare Bunyan's style to that of the English Bible must lack any ear for the cadences of noble prose. Alfred Noyes published an excellent essay on this subject in a volume entitled (unfortunately) *The Opalescent Parrot*.

At the opposite extreme is the prose of Francis Thompson in his essay on Shelley, which seems to me insufferably mannered. It is the current fashion to obliterate the works of Walter Pater; yet granting that most of his essays have wilted away in their own perfume, I would still put in a good word for *Marius the Epicurean*. These are a few typical heresies out of a catalogue which would fill pages.

There is a small green volume, Mackail's *Select Epigrams from the Greek Anthology*, which seems to me the most portable of masterpieces. I do not know whether or not it is still in print. I hope it is. I have given away dozens of copies; I wish I had more than the one left for myself. Among the epigrams: “I am the tomb of one shipwrecked; but sail thou; for when we were perishing, the other ships sailed on over the sea.” There one has as much compact philosophy as was ever expanded into thousands of volumes, so many of them unreadable.

The question of the translation of poetry is a knotty one. I have come to the conclusion that the finest and most rhythmic prose is the best medium. Arthur Waley, whose translations from the Chinese

An American poet, winner of the Pulitzer Prize and author of fourteen volumes of verse, a teacher of versification and English composition for twenty-five years, ROBERT HILLYER has recently resigned as Boylston Professor at Harvard University in order to devote his full time to writing.

are as fine as Mackail's from the Greek (not knowing Chinese, I must judge from the English literary effects merely), told me that the reviewers of his book had missed the main point in his technique. He was designing — at least this is my interpretation of his comment — a special form of verse for his purpose. It approximates cadenced verse; and that, in turn, at its best, is a highly rhythmic prose broken into lines according to the music and dramatic suggestion of what the poet has to say. It is non-metrical; a sort of border between verse and straight prose.

My Chinese friend, Tai Jen, thought Waley's work good as English literature, but mistaken as translation. He would point out discrepancies between Waley's symbolism and his own. I asked him if his own explanation was the classical interpretation in China. "Oh, no," he answered. "Probably no other Chinese critic would accept my version. You see, in China, no two critics have ever entertained the same interpretation of a single poem." Considering which, I think Mr. Waley is on safe ground.

When Foster Damon asked Waley to autograph *170 Chinese Poems*, the amiable Orientalist complied, but after the final flourish of his pen remarked, "Doesn't that make the book secondhand?"

The likelihood is that if a good poet translates into verse, he will re-create, and thus lose the original in his own invention; if a bad poet translates, the results cannot be good. That is why, theoretically at least, I believe that a fine prose version is better.

But one does not live up to one's preaching. When Foster Damon and I were at the University of Copenhagen, we justified our existence by translating an anthology of Danish poetry from Oehlen-schläger to Johannes V. Jensen. We not only put our version into rhyme and meter; we tried to reproduce the meter and rhyme-scheme of the originals. This performance, for the only time in my versifying career, forced me to use a rhyming dictionary. The book passed back and forth between us in agonized frenzy, or one of us would shout to the other, "What is a three-syllable anapestic word which rhymes with *elephant* and means *fern-frond*?" It was a labor of months — fun, for all that, but more like solving a crossword puzzle than writing lyric poetry. I am still proud of some of the pieces. The volume, when published, was called *A Book of Danish Verse*; it is long since out of print. One reward I reaped was the information that the poems (those of them that had been set to music) could be sung to the original melodies.

A group of Danish writers and academicians tried an interesting experiment. They chose a fine passage from one of Johannes V. Jensen's prose works — a description of an oxcart going down a leafy road through a forest. This passage they sent to Stockholm, where it was translated into Swedish. The Swedish version was then sent to Berlin, where it was translated into German; the German version was sent to Paris, and so on, until the passage had been filtered through most of the languages of Europe. The final version, in English, was returned to Copenhagen, where it was translated back into the Danish. The oxcart, the leafy road, the forest, these were still there; but in every other respect the new Danish passage bore no resemblance to the original.

Some years ago, Knopf published a translation of Johannes V. Jensen's *Braeen* (The Glacier) under the title of *Fire and Ice*. Subsequently Wallace Stegner published a novel, *Fire and Ice*. The next year, Lawrence Thompson brought out a book on Robert Frost called *Fire and Ice* — which is, of course, the title of one of Frost's poems. For some time to come, that will do for *Fire and Ice*. Authors are permitted a certain sameness in their contents, but we have a right to insist on some ingenuity in the titles.

Emerson's famous "Brahma" is mostly taken word for word from the *Upanishads*.

Borrowings like these are commendable and were taken for granted in olden days. Sir Sidney Lee, one of the earliest source-hunters in England, discovering that the great Elizabethans helped themselves liberally to the common material handed over from the Classics and the Continent, came to the conclusion, as Arthur Symonds expresses it, "that poets are very prosaic people at heart, and that the Elizabethan poets in particular were persons rather lacking in emotion or imagination, who translated and adapted the poems of French and Italian writers with great ability." The point of view on re-using old material has changed within the last century. Eustache Deschamps, the contemporary of Chaucer, wishing to compliment his friend, celebrated him in a poem with the refrain ending, "Grant translateur, noble Geffroy Chaucier."

On summer afternoons Robert Bridges would sprawl on his lawn at the top of Boar's Hill near Oxford. He lay on his back with his knees up and scribbled away — sometimes — on *The Testament of Beauty*, those loose Alexandrines for which he had schooled himself in the shorter measures of the *New Verse* (a title to be taken literally). Occasionally a

gust of wind would lift a page from his tablet and blow it away. One of these was found by a friend of mine in Sir Arthur Evans's woods near-by. My friend expected a treasure. But the Laureate, like the meanest of us, had whiled away a hiatus in inspiration by idly scratching his name over and over in every conceivable script.

Starting at the bottom of Boar's Hill, a mile or two from Oxford, one passed on the left a great estate crowned by Barclay Castle — an ugly pile in the best medievalism of the Albert Memorial; then, on the right, John Masefield's house, and farther along, the house in which Odell Shepard spent several summers — a place most memorable to me for his hospitality. At the top of the hill was Robert Bridges's house, Chilswell. It was from there that he wrote me, in 1920, after I had sent him the sort of tribute a hero-worshiper of twenty-five would send to a hallowed Laureate. It was concerned with the attacks on Bridges for inviting the German universities to resume friendly relations after the last war.

"I think that our effort at Oxford will do good," he wrote. "The attempt to belittle its significance cannot stand; but at present the irreconcilables are so hot that it is wiser not to heckle them. On our side we have I think an increasing majority among the teachers & you will be interested to know that the undergraduates w^d poll strongly for us. Moreover in the French Club here a motion of censure on the 'manifesto' was lost by $\frac{2}{3}$ s and incontinently 'adjourned.' . . . The Times w^d have supported us eight months ago; just now it happens that Harmsworth's skirmishings with Lloyd George suggest another line to him: the M.P.'s cannot speak for fear of their electoral mobs, and they are gassed by the Turkish atmosphere of the House, but as Labour, when it has been able to speak, will be on our side, many of them will adopt seasonable maxims. The awful condition of the country distracts people's intelligence, & no one can guess what is going to happen. The women's vote at the next election will discover what is to be hoped from the particular intelligence of the sex. For myself I w^d not have you fancy that I am suffering any of a martyr's discomforts, or that I sh^d be very sensitive to them if I were. My danger is lest I sh^d be distracted from the serious nature of the controversy by enjoyment of the sporting side, & by the full appreciation of those humorous comicalities with which Providence so ingeniously lightens our sorrows. . . ."

I conceive a lecture in English poetry as an interpretation of the poetry itself. Except when a poet is

inextricably bound up with his work, as were the Romantics and Whitman, there is only the verse — its technique, its meaning, and the general outlook on existence — to consider. How wise Matthew Arnold was in exclaiming of Shakespeare: "Others abide our question. Thou art free." So many writers and their work present what the philosophers would call a dualism. So many, like Christopher Marlowe, wrote divinely, but were bawdy fellows. Shakespeare was lucky in leaving scarcely a trace behind (always excepting the Baconians).

We say of a great artist that he loses himself in his work. In truth, he finds himself in his work. The work itself is the thing. Nothing else matters — not his external actions, not what solemn commentators have said about him, not where and when editions were printed of him, not from what sources he drew or how he influenced others and they him.

It is impossible to give the same lecture twice on any one poet; therefore, set notes — worst of all a written document — are impossible. Every year one's own taste deepens and detaches; all this refreshing must be communicated. A lecture is a creative enterprise delivered before a young public who must not be misled or befooled or condescended to.

"How does he do it?" said a Harvard undergraduate as he emerged from one of Bliss Perry's lectures on the Lake Poets. "He must have said and thought those things for more than twenty years, but when he says them the words are fresh as dew."

Years ago when I took over the course in versification which Dean Briggs had so long and so magnificently presented at Harvard, I, being young and scared, asked him if he would let me look over his notes. He gently refused. After his death, his family gave me access to all his notes. I came to those on the course I was giving and overrode a sense of guilt by looking at just a few, which were on little cards. They had nothing on them but essential reminders of dates and facts, and a few quotations. Those beautiful and enthusiastic discourses on the marrow of our poetry had been improvisations; they had been the creation of a great critical literature, ever changing and never put down.

Lecturing, therefore, is a work of art which must be ever changing, never permanent. Had a short-hand expert taken down the Dean's lectures, and had they been published, the result would have been misleading. It would have caught in amber what was essentially and joyously ever on the wing.

LEADING A HORSE TO WATER

by CORNELIA STRATTON PARKER

1

As Foreign Policy Chairman of the Williamstown League of Women Voters, I took a good look at the League members in the attractive room at the new Adams Memorial Theatre. They had no need of forums. They wouldn't be members of the League if they weren't already politically-minded and already more intelligent on the subject of foreign policy than the average. It was more important to reach the rest of Williamstown, not just the few conscientious enough to join the League of Women Voters. But how?

The idea of the Community Forum began to stir in my eager mind — and nearly passed out from cold water before it could take concrete shape. "You can never put it over in Williamstown, never!" people said. What were my poor enthusiasm and faith of eleven years' residence against the practically unanimous judgment of citizens who had all but fought the Indians?

A Community Forum does not mean a list of imported speakers paid for out of a fat budget, a few staid meetings a year on the Important Things of Life, an average of three polite questions from the polite and well-groomed audience, and an "Interesting, wasn't it?" on the way out. A Community Forum means something approaching the old town meeting idea, a getting together of a cross-section of the town, rich, poor, young, old, black, white, men and women, brains and brawn, business and professions, to discuss informally the national and international problems facing us all — and to keep our elected officials aware of our concern. From the start it must have the backing and encouragement of all elements of the community, and not be any one-man show.

I first sounded out the potential response to the

forum idea by using one of my columns appearing in the *North Adams Transcript* to ask how many would be interested in such an undertaking. I'd show the scoffers! A handsome pile of letters would prove how unwarranted was their cynicism.

I got two postcards in reply — one from an elderly woman in Williamstown, one from a woman in North Adams. Never before have I let a soul know those statistics. I merely referred to the "immediate response" to my column. And it was immediate — the two cards appeared the very next day. A short time later, I got a letter from Dr. Leonard of the local Lions, expressing his personal interest in that column and asking if I would speak at the next Lions' meeting on the subject of interesting the community in lasting peace. That letter and invitation crystallized my somewhat wavering faith in the forum idea. So the "response" to my column actually did start the Williamstown forum — via Dr. Leonard and Lions — after all.

Representatives of most of the organizations and all the churches in town were asked to an organization meeting at the Williams Inn. A goodly percentage of them came. They were helpful and interested, but doubtful about results. From my dreams of surging hundreds I came down, finally, to a possible twenty. If only twenty saw fit to turn out for a discussion of the pressing issues our country faced, I should be grateful, and we would meet in the Red Cross room on Spring Street.

At this point I wish to stress one of the truest bits of practical advice I know about meetings — and if more high-minded and hard-working souls would take it to heart, the history of appealing to the public, in behalf of whatever cause, might tell a different story. Certainly the morale of speakers and audiences would be immeasurably higher.

My father was a politician in the best definition of the word. He held that there was one criterion above all others by which the success of a meeting could be valued: you must always have to bring in

Author and lecturer, and an American who has never lost her zest for democracy, CORNELIA STRATTON PARKER will be affectionately remembered by *Atlantic* readers for *An American Idyll*, the true story of a young couple, which has no peer in American letters.

extra chairs. Twelve persons in a room prepared for ten can appear more effective than four hundred straggling into an auditorium capable of holding a thousand. Speaker and audience gaze about with a feeling of sympathy for those who worked hard and faithfully to make the gathering a success — and failed. Evidently there just isn't enough popular interest in the Cause.

"Don't risk the success of a Williamstown discussion group by a smattering of persons in a room far too large," I told myself. "If twenty come, they will nicely fill the Red Cross room. If more than twenty out of over two thousand voting citizens turn up, then we'll crowd the room and everyone there will report that our initial response was beyond all hopes!"

It became clear before the first meeting that quarters bigger than the Red Cross room would be necessary. The superintendent of schools urged us to have the meetings in the high school auditorium. The very thought was terrifying. I saw my father; I saw those empty seats. So the arrangement was that the very coöperative principal of the high school would have a small classroom lighted and ready. If it looked as if only enough to fill a classroom were coming, then we would act as if we never intended to use anything else.

For seven summer Monday evenings we collected in the auditorium. The first meeting we comfortably filled the hall. The second meeting we brought in extra seats. The third we used all available extra seats, filled the aisles, and had them standing. The fourth meeting we were lucky in combining the Democratic Senator and Republican Congressman, who were touring these parts for the Ball, Burton, Hatch, Hill Resolution — which was the very topic we had down for that week's meeting. The crowd was large enough to warrant using Chapin Hall on the college campus.

Alas that the steady and responsive increase can't be reported as holding to the end. It seems to be the story of many such gatherings in many parts of the land. Public interest can hold out for four or five meetings. Beyond that, no matter what the subjects and their importance, attendance drops.

Overhopeful, we held on for those seven scheduled discussions and listened to our own townspeople for the most part. They talked on why the United States was forced to fight two wars in twenty-five years, and explained some of the better-known peace plans, lay and church and governmental. Two meetings were devoted to the attitudes of the two major political parties toward international coöperation; at another we discussed how our labor and race problems would influence our international

position. And each meeting brought more urgent pleas that we make the more or less formal talks shorter, allowing more time for questions.

"If you can make a success of the forum idea in Williamstown, you can get one going anywhere!" That was the comment of many a previous scoffer, especially those mindful of the town-and-gown cleavage in our community.

Perhaps you can, if you are prepared to run the whole thing without much help, because nobody considers the chances of success strong enough to justify expending the necessary time and energy. Perhaps so if you dog the footsteps of every influential citizen who dares to show his face in public, scatter leaflets by hand which nobody has a desire to read, turn a deaf ear to all gloom-spreaders, tramp miles in the heat of summer or chills of winter to ring doorbells of persons who don't want to answer and sometimes don't answer. Perhaps so if you hound possible speakers, who invariably say "Horrors, no!" at first, and possible moderators ("But I never did anything like that in my life"), and the local reporter (and did the paper come through handsomely with publicity!). By the end of the forum season will you have a friend left in the town? No.

"Our Town Can Help Win the Peace!" those Williamstown leaflets read. "We are more important than the President, than Congress. Without us a peace of small value, a temporary peace like the last, can be put over on the country. Without us the best peace won't hold. . . . If not enough of us care what role the United States plays in the post-war world, it can be a peace of party politics, of shortsighted narrowness damaging to our own national welfare and the whole world's good. . . . Let the towns of this land say, 'We citizens of a democracy are the power to make a lasting peace and a better America, a better world — and we'll get it.' . . . A captain wrote from North Africa to a United States Senator, 'There is a need, a great thunderous, bloodstained need, for the people to generate the energy it takes in a preoccupied democracy to get things done. *And only the people can do it. Congress alone never will.* If I were there, knowing even the little I do, I would devote every hour of every long day to winning this greatest of all victories — the Victory of the Peace.' . . . Will you give one hour a week?"

2

WHEN the Williamstown experiment survived, the Forum Committee of the Joint Council for Inter-

national Coöperation in Boston got the notion that I might take over the state, as it were. Their theory was that the localities most in need of forums and most receptive to the idea would be those of between 5000 and 20,000 population.

We had not then learned that the more need, the less receptivity. Mind, in every town I visited, there were activity and ability when it came to Red Cross drives, war bond drives, community chest drives. Women in uniform drove around corners on two wheels, other women in other uniforms rolled bandages, plain-clothes women collected fats. What was lacking was the slightest realization that there will be the whole thing to do over — and it will be far worse — unless we bestir ourselves about the present and future at home and abroad.

The discouraging reactions to the idea of a Community Forum ranged from honest acceptance by enthusiasts who had “no time,” to the contentment of a superintendent of schools who held that “we’ve got a good Republican from this district in the State House in Boston and a good Republican from this district in Congress and I guess we can pretty well leave things in their hands,” to the cynicism of the leading citizen of one community, — by “leading” I mean head of more committees than anyone else, — who asked, “What’s the sense of talking about peace and the post-war world? Soon as this war is over, we’ve got to get busy and fight Russia.”

The original plan had been to interest first the clergymen of the various denominations. In almost every town I visited I talked with ministers, old and young — and on the whole with disconsolate results. In one town of almost 7000 it soon became clear that there wasn’t one minister worth seeing in the whole town. The members of the dwindling churches said so, the editor of the local paper said so, the school people said so. Shades of Governor Winthrop!

In one town I was calling on the president of the Catholic Women’s Club. She was all for the forum idea and eager to bring it up before her club. “Of course, you’d first have to get the approval of Father —. If he’s willing, we can go ahead. If he doesn’t approve, the club can do nothing about it.”

Father — was a hard man to reach. The rectory was imposing, an impressive place in which to wait, and I waited. At last there was Father —. Dear, dear, what a breezy and easy person to meet! No Protestant ever had welcomed me with such fervor and interest in my well-being. And what brought me into his presence?

To obtain his blessing, I explained. Not on me,

but on what I hoped to start in his town. Here was a man to draw inspired words. Never had I done oratorically better by the Community Forum idea.

Father — heard me out. “I’ll tell you what I’ll do. I’ll put the whole weight of the Catholic Church in this community behind you if you’ll promise me one thing.”

(Only ask me, holy Father. What wouldn’t I promise for the Cause?)

“Will you promise that at the first meeting of the Community Forum in this town you will get up and start the meeting with the statement, ‘Divorce is a crime?’”

“But Father —,” I gulped as soon as I could get my breath, “the object of the forums is to lead up to an interest in international issues and the international peace settlement.”

“Exactly!” continued the unruffled Father. “What’s the use of peace if you have nothing but a lot of broken families all over the land?”

“If the community decides it would like one forum meeting to discuss the subject of divorce,” I kept on weakly, longing not to forfeit the support of the most influential man in the large Catholic population of the town, “one side most certainly could make such a statement. But to start the entire forum series with that announcement —”

“Either that or you get no support from me!”

In contrast to a certain amount of Christian apathy, in no town visited did I receive anything but enthusiastic coöperation from the Jewish element in the community. Every rabbi was a joy to talk to; every Jew, male or female, backed the forum idea.

3

THE first morning in Taunton, I tried phoning to make an appointment with the president of a women’s club. She was busy; no, she couldn’t spare even five minutes. Perhaps if I wrote what I wanted to see her about she might take it up with “her board” — it didn’t sound as if it were anything the club would be interested in. (Ah me, the difference between the time when you want the president of a club to listen to a new idea and when one of them, orchid-bedecked, welcomes you to the platform “to honor us this afternoon with an Important Message” — check to follow.)

That conversation left me sputtering. I vowed I’d never again try to remake the world over the phone. In that frame of mind I turned my outraged back on the other female names on my list and made for the president of the local Lions.

The president was in his shopwindow arranging

jewelry. "What do you want?" demanded the vexed man. "I'm very busy and can give you no time."

Then and there I made up my mind that not one more person was to be allowed to treat International Coöperation with disdain. "How dare you talk to me like that!" I heard myself blurt out, and me an Alice Ben Bolt. "Get that glare off your face and come down out of that window at once!" And down he came, chastened in mind and spirit.

From that moment, the president of the Lions was one of the most helpful and coöperative souls in all Taunton. The impetus may have come from fright. So there was Mr. L—— leaning on a glass showcase, phoning the program chairmen of Rotary and Kiwanis, urging me to speak at the next Lions' meeting, thumbing through the phone book to ring up so-and-so "you ought to see." In deep gratitude I spent a dollar in his shop not charged to my expense account.

Mr. K—— of Kiwanis was friendly and coöperative, although his initial approach as I entered the office of the Water Department bespoke a certain wariness which might have been caused by some stored-up unhappy memory having to do with lady reformers. He thawed out handsomely and asked me to speak at the next Kiwanis meeting. It was impossible to spend a dollar on the Taunton Water Department.

Mr. H—— of Rotary was more than agreeable to the idea of my speaking at their next meeting, but then he left town — and left me to the mercies of a fellow official, in the furniture business, whose suspicions of me and my cause left us both unhappy. *What* a forum would discuss and *why* and *who would pay for it* troubled him sorely.

I spoke before the Lions Club at a U-shaped table in a corner of a large ballroom. When I finished, a member immediately rose and moved that a committee immediately be appointed to coöperate with me to see that the Lions backed the Community Forum idea 100 per cent. A somewhat stouter member immediately rose to move that the Lions have nothing to do with any of it. "What'll you get at meetings like Mrs. Parker here was talking about? A bunch of crackpots, that's what. Nothing but crackpots. I move we drop the subject right here." At that point I tactfully retired while the Lions fought out some fine point of parliamentary law and their own regulations.

I spoke before Kiwanis beside the famous indoor waterfall. Everybody stops at the Taunton Inn to eat beside the waterfall. What with the basement being too dim to see and the falls too loud to hear anything else, it ought to be the most popular spot

in the state for shy women past forty. But for a woman yearning to get over an idea eloquently before a group of some fifty men, it was agony.

4

SUPPOSE you succeeded in spreading forum enthusiasm over an entire community, what was the good of it if no person or group in the town was willing to take the responsibility of getting a forum started and keeping it going? It wasn't my business actually to start a forum. No community would relish a total stranger's coming in for such a purpose, nor could I possibly take the time. From experience I knew that to launch a forum might take weeks on end. My job was to try to get a local group together, called by one citizen who was willing to take the lead or to have the group appoint a leader. Each community was to decide for itself what type of meetings it would hold, and how often and where, according to local sentiment and conditions. The Forum Committee of the Joint Council for International Coöperation stood ready to supply suggestions, and speakers if they were desired.

Going to have a baby . . . just had a baby . . . war orders . . . Red Cross . . . nurse's aide . . . sick father-in-law . . . new men's club in the church . . . leaving for Washington . . . Boy Scouts . . . or just a general "I'm not the person to run a thing like that."

And how often the weary words, "You just never could get any group like that together in this town — nobody would come." Indeed you could tell that even the worthy citizens who so fervently asserted, "A forum would be the best thing in the world for this town!" wouldn't attend the meetings. Yet only once did we come across a person openly dead-set against the whole forum business. An American Legion florist informed me (by what malice I was directed to him both he and I were at a loss to make out) that he was hostile to the idea of forums, had no use for them, wouldn't go near one if it was right next door. There.

I had arrived in my first town well-heeled with letters of introduction. What good did they do? I pleaded to be allowed to descend upon a community in my own sweet way — since at least, if I had no concrete results to show for my visit, I could get a good bit of fun and adventure out of the experience. And so the technique came to be that I got off a train or bus in a strange town, not knowing north or south, god-fearing or delinquent. I walked along the main street until I spied a person carrying a book, or preferably books. Of him or her I asked (1)

where the library was and the name of the librarian; (2) where I could find the editor of the town newspaper (weekly as a rule in the sized towns I visited); (3) where the office of the superintendent of schools was.

According to (1) hunch or (2) weather and nearness to where my feet then stood, I made a determined march to one of those headquarters and asked with the assurance of a Fuller Brush Man for the librarian, editor, or school superintendent by name. My air became so masterfully confident that no one would dream of shoving me aside. Once or twice I found the school superintendent decrepit physically or functioning mentally in the Chester Alan Arthur era. If both librarian and editor said, "Don't bother with him," I didn't. If the librarian had gone too long underfed and had become musty (don't inquire as to her salary voted by the town fathers and lived on forty years or you'll begin to cry), I didn't bother her either.

Of all the human beings I talked with on my mission to Massachusetts towns, I treasure the memory of small-town editors among the highest. What an editor doesn't know about his community and its leading citizens isn't worth knowing. And most of them are just plain fun to talk with. They put their feet up on a desk, draw on an unresponsive pipe, and appear gayly willing to visit forever. When you tear yourself away, you have the low-down on that town. I have never found an editor wrong yet.

The one editor I called on who was totally unenthusiastic over forums and glared at me stonily was Charlie, brother of Joe in Congress. Nobody in the town calls him anything but Charlie. He looked like a small, disheveled Heywood Broun — with all comparisons stopping there. His face was expressionless, indifferent. He didn't rise when I entered or ask me to be seated. I stood. His comment on my less than eloquent plea for interest and support for a Community Forum (it's hard to be eloquent in the presence of a bored stare) was: "You can't start a forum in this town. You got to have some intellectuals to start a forum and there aren't any intellectuals in this town. Besides," he added defiantly, "the people of this town aren't interested in peace and such. They're interested in war. They've got no time to talk about peace." So much for the heartfelt backing of the *Evening Chronicle*.

5

Nobody else anywhere was like Miss — shall I call her Miss New England? She was the embodi-

ment of the country's idea of a typical New England spinster in hair, dress, house, manner. Everyone in that particular town kept telling me, "You must see Miss New England! If you can get her on your side your cause is won."

But Miss N. E., running the town as she did, was difficult to catch. Finally, when the bell echoed in the tidy Victorian cottage, the door was opened by a woman who seemed six feet tall and about fifty years of age, and who glared. She continued to glare as I stood on the porch reporting weakly on how everyone told me she was the one person I must see and interest in what brought me to her town. Her expression said plainly, "Baby, don't try to put over any of your flip on me." Resignedly she sighed, "Well, come in."

Hardly had I begun to tell her about the Community Forum idea than she asked sternly, "Who did you say sent you here?"

I again mentioned the Joint Council for International Coöperation. "The name means nothing to me. Who are they?"

I tried desperately to recall the names down the letter paper: Association of University Women; Massachusetts League of Women Voters; League of Nations Association, Boston Branch; Boston Young Women's Christian Association; American Defense, Harvard Group — a few of the thirty or so affiliated organizations. As I feebly neared the end, my memory grew vague and I trailed off with "and some of the labor groups."

"You mean to say the *unions* sent you here?"

"Oh, dear, no! There isn't a union knows I'm here."

"Then what sort of organization is this Joint-whatever if they do things without their membership's knowing anything about it?"

I tried to placate her by explaining the organization of the Forum Committee within the Joint Council, and described the monthly reports on the formation of forums about the state.

"What's the Forum Committee? Who is on it?"

I longed to tell her three anarchists, five trade unionists, six CIO's, and the rest Communists speaking nothing but Russian. As it was, I mentioned some of the most worthy and high-minded of Bay State citizens grown gray in the cause of international organization toward lasting peace.

"Never heard of any of them" was all the good their names did me or their cause.

"What's your connection with all this? I don't understand."

Painfully I explained that if my funds had allowed I'd be doing what I was doing with no help from anybody. As it was, the Forum Committee

was paying my expenses, for which I was deeply grateful.

"If they're paying your expenses, they must expect to be getting something out of it!"

"What they hope to get out of it is a forum!"

For one second that floored her. Then she burst out with "Will you tell me why in the world they sent you to this town to start a forum?"

At which point I looked her in the eye and laughed. "*You're asking me?*" And bless my soul, she smiled.

She started giving me names of persons to see (after she had made it plain how she felt about Catholics and Jews — *and Democrats*). By the time I was in a state to pick myself up and be off, she was actually friendly. "Mind now," she said at the door, "it isn't that I have any doubts about you personally or your organization. But before I make up my mind to give my support to any cause I want to know all about it. You put down in writing all the information possible and I'll be much obliged." As a last fling she called after me, smiling again, "If you can succeed in this town, every other place you try will be child's play!"

Later I ran into the minister who had specially urged me to see Miss N. E. "That's herself all right!" he laughed. "But boy — if you can get her interested, she'll work herself to the bone for you. She has brains, she has time, she has money — you'd better keep after her!"

But I don't know. It seems to me forums will have to stand or fall without the blessing or backing of the Miss N. E.'s of the land. I'd say brains, time, and money were three very pleasant assets for anybody interested in any cause; but for forums to discuss all sides of all sorts of problems, a warm tolerance needs to be added. A little less of what goes by the name of New England, a little more gutter; a little less stern sense of duty, a little more "Hiya-Keed!"

I had some success. I breezed into Norwood and out again within an hour and a forum was started. More than a forum: Miss Phillips, one of those librarians to make you feel God will pick the angels at His right hand and at His left from among librarians, promised to get a weekly group going at the library, basing their discussions on the top books dealing with international coöperation.

She recommended that I see the superintendent of schools first, his name heading the list of likely citizens she generously furnished me. I had hardly begun to expand to Mr. Lynch on the role school boards and school superintendents are playing throughout the country in starting forums in their respective communities when he broke in with "I want to get a forum going in this town!"

It was always an adventure I looked forward to with high anticipation, that tracking down of ministers, teachers, club men and women, editors, crackpots, and the overstaid. I was a mite regretful to have to depart from Norwood with my two calls removing the need for further ones.

In Sharon, after approaching saint and sinner, dubious male and dubious female, the angels led me to a professor who wanted a forum — and if no one else could be found to take over the initial responsibility, he would. I found it hard to keep from hurling my arms around this strange man's neck.

At long, long last, forums got started here and there in the unenthusiastic state of Massachusetts, and often as not the gloom-spreaders were right. Only a handful turned out. In numerous towns I visited, forums had been tried in the past, usually under the initial supervision of some intellectually eager minister of the gospel. They drew a pitifully small group — and expired.

Is it really that people don't care enough, aren't interested in the issues their nation faces? I think it is just that. The complexities of the nation and of the world discourage the average citizen from ever trying to understand them. Does education leave the majority indifferent? In part — but where are you going to find enough interested teachers aware of the responsibilities of citizenship?

The experience of trying to start forums has left me with the conviction that for many a community it is a misuse of time and a drain on spiritual vitality to aim for numbers. Our democracy functions through minorities, some infinitesimal, too many with selfish and subversive designs. If in each community in the land only five persons can be found willing to get together to become more intelligent, to increase their value as citizens, with the good of the nation and the world their goal, sooner or later the far corners of the earth will know the difference.

Accent on Living

Gamblers

By FRED SCHWED, JR.

THE heady vice of gambling could not get started until people had discovered the concept of private ownership. We may be sure that very shortly after a system had been established whereby it was possible to own something, all for oneself, this new device appeared whereby one could lose possession of something, suddenly, and without violence.

More people have been gambling more money in recent years in this country than ever before — and our country was never one to be bashful at the tables, the track, the cards, the dice, or the ticker. The only speculative medium we ever eschewed was the tulip.

There are millions of gamblers in the land, and we may as well dismiss the vast majority of them with the fond and impossible hope that they will all win a little. They are doing themselves and others no deep, irreparable injury. But among these millions there are certain hundred thousands who are subtly and terribly different. The family which contains one is, or will be, sorry.

So little attention has been paid to this subtle difference that there is no name for these people. They need a name. If this were the field of liquor,

FRED SCHWED, JR., viewed the great speculative orgies from the inside in the years he worked in Wall Street. He subsequently expressed his skepticism in a lively book entitled *Where Are the Customers' Frights?* He now has equally strong misgivings about the many other forms of gaming which have lately come to make margin trading look like a small matter in the field of win and lose.

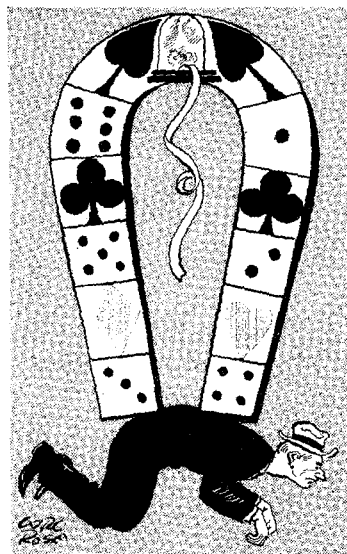
they would be called, not drinkers, but alcoholics, which is a useful distinction. Indeed the entire analogy between drinking and gambling is instructive. Most of us have come to understand the difference between drinkers and alcoholics. There are countless millions of drinkers, occasional or steady; and if they desisted they might be healthier and wealthier, but that is disputable. They drink for a variety of reasons, derive certain satisfactions,

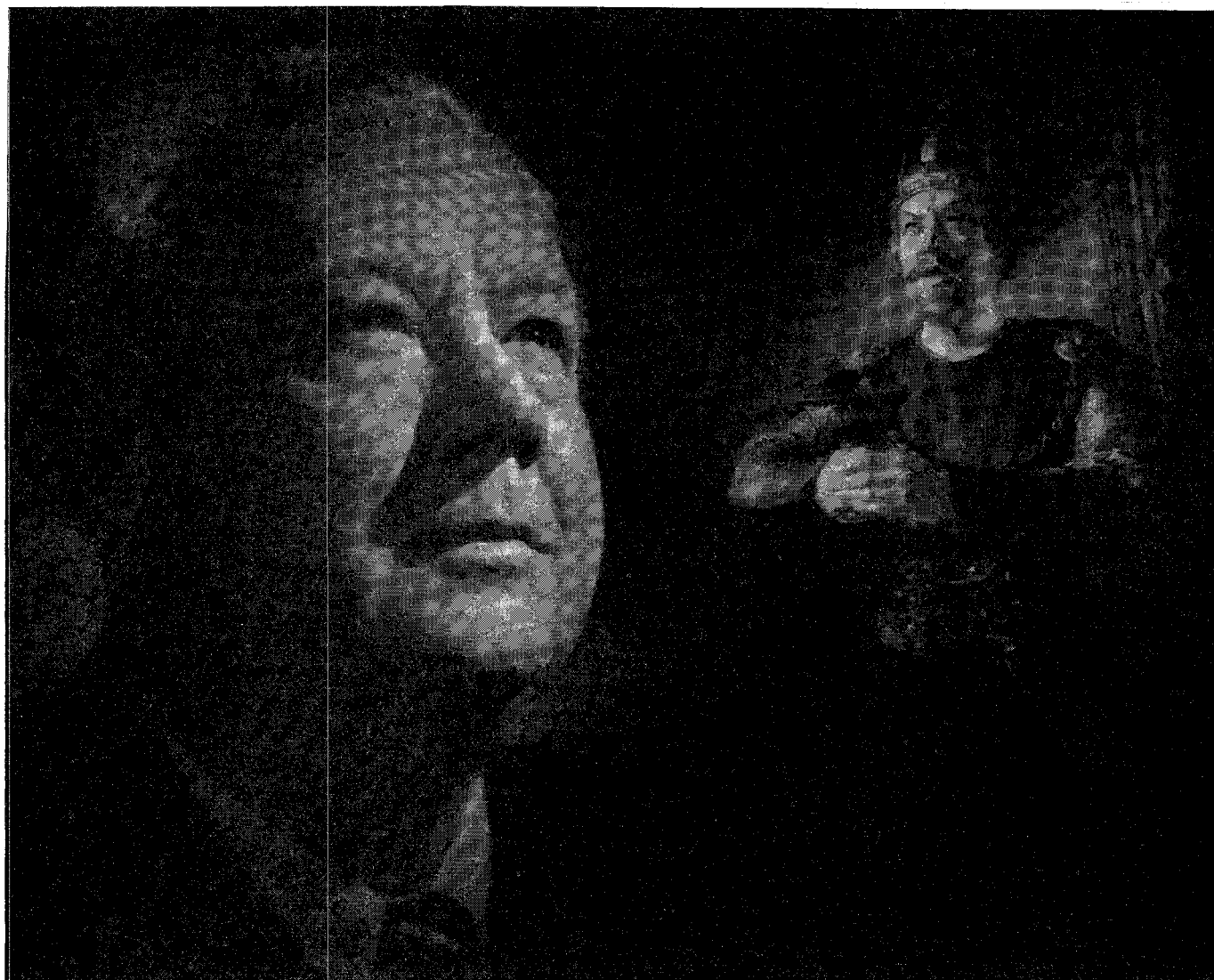
and pay certain penalties. But the alcoholic drinks because he has to. He derives no satisfaction, the penalties are hideous, and he knows beforehand just what they are going to be. It is not, of course, a question of how many c.c. of alcohol he has consumed that sets him off so distinctly and tragically from the other drinkers. It is the attitude in which he approaches his drink. He does not choose to take it; he is compelled to do so; he acts compulsively.

The compulsive gambler, the man for whom we have not yet a single-word name, is similar. There are many reasons for gambling, some of them excellent and some entirely

erroneous, but the compulsive gambler is prompted by none of them. He too can predict his fate — in his case with mathematical certainty, if he knows anything at all about mathematics (and he usually does). Here too the end will be disgrace and despair, with a few other embellishments like bankruptcy and possibly a jail sentence.

The analogy between the compulsive drinker and the compulsive gambler is not perfect, but there is enough in it to be useful in making a start at understanding these tragic and neglected people. I say





The Kammersanger Shares a Triumph

Lauritz Melchior's Great Performance as "Tristan" is Reproduced By The Meissner

The entire party moved toward the majestic figure in the doorway with cheery congratulations.

It was Lauritz Melchior, bearer of the title "Kammersanger,"—singer to the Royal Court of Denmark. Tonight he had appeared for the 200th time in the role of "Tristan."

Suddenly the hum of conversation stopped, for within the room sounded the first strains of the famous "Love Duet" from "Tristan."

"A recording?" Melchior asked incredulously, "with such tone?" And as the stirring voice of Tristan lifted above the music, he sank spellbound into a nearby chair.

☆ ☆ ☆

This was the Meissner electronic radio-

phonograph, and Melchior's introduction to it had been arranged for this anniversary of his 200th performance as "Tristan."

Minutes later as the first record neared its end, Melchior began to rise, but as the Meissner's automatic record changer gently lifted the record, reversed it and replaced it in playing position, he resumed his chair, intent on the wizardry of this ingenious device.

Now he marveled again at the faithful reproduction of *all* the tones. Often, many of them had been "missing elements."

"For me, this is a truly great anniversary," he said. "Tonight's celebration should be shared with the people who worked to build this instrument."

☆ ☆ ☆

So Lauritz Melchior, added his praises of the Meissner to those of other artists.

Today only one such instrument exists. Appropriately it is on loan "for the duration" to the high school of Meissner's home community.

With your own luxurious postwar Meissner, you will be able to play for two hours without touching a record. You will have Super Shortwave, FM, and a host of other advancements now being engineered for our armed forces.



neglected because the doctors in mental fields have so little opportunity to work on them. Psychiatrists will often agree that compulsive gambling represents a true neurosis. But the people who won't agree are the compulsive gamblers, and this is entirely understandable.

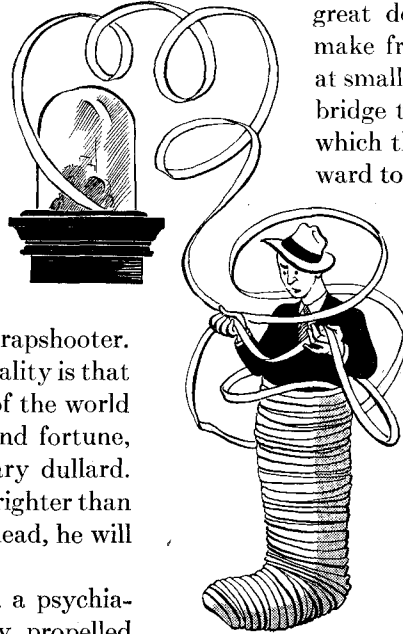
A drunkard can frequently be shown that he is temporarily mentally ill. Not so with a hysterical and persistent crapshooter. The basic assumption of his whole personality is that he is a good deal smarter than the rest of the world and can make his living, attain fame and fortune, without working all day like an ordinary dullard. The suggestion that, far from his being brighter than others, there is something wrong in his head, he will not entertain for a moment.

Only occasionally do such men reach a psychiatrist's office. They are almost forcibly propelled there by relatives who reason that the doctor's fees cannot possibly cost them so much as the victim's expensive hobby. Gambling is one of the few pursuits for which men will expend all their own fortune and all of anyone else's upon which they can lay their hands. Among gamblers, such conduct is only interesting, never surprising.

Four brief case histories will make clear the important distinction between the many sane gamblers and the much rarer neurotic cases. The first three victims are mentally sound. They may not be wise or useful. But the fourth needed mental therapy and would not perhaps be in moral and financial ruin today if he could have received it.

The first case is not a particularly attractive specimen to most people. He is the millionaire who not infrequently buys twenty thousand shares of some speculative stock some morning and thereafter can indulge in the questionable pleasure of watching his fortune ebb and flow hourly at a preposterous rate. This may seem a futile way to spend one's life, but Mr. A enjoys it. He exercises what he believes to be keen judgment and is careful to see to it that he does not go broke. He is not neurotic. (Unhappily, there is always a chance that under the lash of a disastrous losing streak he will become neurotic.)

Second, we have the case of a suburban couple, Mr. and Mrs. B, who have two small children and an income of eighty dollars a week. They love, above everything else, to play contract bridge with wealthier people for a quarter — or even a half — cent a point. This activity can be viewed by the upright with considerable horror, because when the B's start guessing all the finesses wrong, the effect can soon be observed in the children's clothes. But their indulgence still makes good sense. They get a



great deal of pleasure out of it; they make friends. Neither of them is good at small talk (or big talk) and in contract bridge they have discovered an activity which they not only enjoy but look forward to with keen anticipation. Finally, they are not such poor players, or at least so they honestly think, and they expect to win.

Our third case is pathetically ignorant, but she is in no need of the services of a psychiatrist. She is a Negro charwoman and every morning before leaving Harlem she buys a number in the policy game, for a nickel. If she should ever beat this cruel lottery she will be paid thirty dollars, or 600 to one, while her actual chance is only one in 999. To make this venture a lot worse than that, there is the definite possibility that, should she ever win, the "runner" with whom she deals will keep right on running, taking both the thirty dollars and the original nickel with him.

Economically it is as unwise of her to indulge this fancy as to try to maintain a shooting lodge on the Scottish moors. But she is entirely sane; she has her reasons, which just happen to be wrong. One of them is that in a cold and toiling world she can purchase a bright spot of hope for a nickel, and one can make an argument there. But her other and more specific reason is that she believes that the policy game offers her the best opportunity she will ever have to amass thirty dollars all at once. "And oh, my friends," as Mayor La Guardia would say on the radio, "she is mistaken." She has chosen the worst way of amassing thirty dollars ever conceived by the devious minds of cynical and wicked men.

Now for our fourth and last case — the neuropath who implacably insists on ruining himself, and for no reasons, not even wrong ones.

This will be no romantic account of a last despairing turn at the tables and a pistol shot among the rosebushes. Our Mr. D lives in the suburbs and is pretty much on the dull side. He is forty-eight years old, has a family, a college education, and no visible vices. His business and social references were excellent, until recently.

Every afternoon Mr. D used to keep one office boy exclusively and secretly busy placing bets on all seven races at one and sometimes two tracks. The horses might be running at a track twenty minutes away or at one as far away as Cuba. It made no

The postcard, addressed to CBS from Paris simply said:

"Dear Sir:

"I am glad to inform you that during the last four years I listened every day to the salutary radio-voice of your so powerful station. With my best thanks and kindest regards, M. Vinot."

When CBS correspondent Richard Hottelet went to see M. Vinot in an old cold Montmartre apartment he found a lively, middle-aged, air conditioning engineer wearing knitted wristwarmers, horn rimmed glasses, a wool scarf and a beret. Vinot said he and his family turned the radio on low every night just before dinner during the German occupation and tuned in CBS shortwave broadcasts.

"They sustained me through all that time" he said.

★

The varied pattern of CBS' 4-hour segment of time on Saturday afternoon points up radio's striking capacity to capture and sustain the listener's attention. You start at 2 p.m. EWT with John Mason Brown's pungent, colorful discussion of the newest books, followed by *Adventures in Science* in which Watson Davis lets you look into the microscopes that are fashioning a new world.

At 3 p.m. EWT you move into the first of three CBS documentary programs bringing you a vivid picture of the land you live in and the chief problems it now faces. In *The Land Is Bright* you sense sharply the traditions, customs, and behavior that make Americans the kind of people they are. We listen to ourselves going to school, falling in love, and getting ahead.

At 3:45 p.m. EWT *Job For Tomorrow*, produced with the cooperation of the CIO, offers some clear thinking on insuring maximum post-war employment.

At 4:15 p.m. CBS brings in its foreign correspondents in *Report From Overseas*, and at 4:30 you hear a program which has gripped the conscience and imagination of listeners throughout the country. It's called *Assignment Home*. It tells you what

you can do, in fact what you must do, to help the returning veteran make his private peace with Main Street. Then at 5, Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra take you out of the world for a solid hour.

Quite an afternoon when you stop to think of it. ★

Riding 25,000 feet above Wichita, George Gow, news announcer of KFH, CBS' affiliate, made the first broadcast of an Army acceptance test flight of a new Superfortress just off the Boeing assembly lines.



You heard Gow's description of the take-off, the cross talk between pilot and navigator, between pilot and ground crew, between pilot and engineer, as the B-29 climbed at the rate of 500 feet per minute to 8000 feet. Then you heard the pilot give the order to pressurize and power climb to 25,000 feet at the rate of 1000 feet per minute. At 25,000 feet Gow reported it was 18 below outside, 55 above inside.

Then you heard J. Earl Schaefer, Boeing vice president talk from the ground to the plane, heard him say:

"...We have just received news that at this very moment B-29's just like the one you're in are bombing both Tokyo and the Island of Formosa and that General MacArthur has landed on Luzon. I thought you people up in the air would be interested in having the latest news from the ground." ★

The late evening CBS news broadcast on January 16 carried the following austere report:

"...in Washington, the answer to many of the questions about what kind of radio and what kind of television the American public will have after the war, was offered today by the Federal Communications Commission in a report of proposed allocations in the radio spectrum...As to television, the report opens the door for a much better kind of television picture in both black and white and in color, to be broadcast on... higher frequencies.

Present standards on the lower frequencies will be maintained in the meantime. The Commission, however, strongly urges continued work on the higher television standards in the higher frequencies and emphasizes their importance to a full grown nation-wide television service."

To this good news CBS added next day in a statement to the press:

"...the FCC proposals provide space for thirty frequencies, each of them twice as wide as present bands, for television pictures twice as good, in the higher wave lengths.

"Thus, in effect, the Commission actually proposes six times as much space in the spectrum for the new and better pictures as for the 'prewar' pictures...the whole factual content of the...report clearly indicates the Commission's desire and belief that television should move promptly into the higher frequencies which alone permit high-quality pictures and true nationwide television service...

"...CBS will redouble its efforts to be the first to demonstrate in actual broadcasting in the New York area, the higher quality television pictures in full, natural color which the upper reaches of the radio spectrum make possible.

"Until the recent revision of war production schedules and its effect on civilian priorities, we were confident that this could be done before the end of 1945. It may still be done in that time, and in any event will be done at the earliest possible moment consistent with an all-out war effort."

Any day now the Commission's final "traffic rules" may clear the path for the fine-quality pictures CBS first publicly proposed in April of 1944.

★

This is

CBS

the COLUMBIA

BROADCASTING SYSTEM

odds to Mr. D or the boy, neither of whom attended horse races.

Now again there are plenty of good reasons for playing the horses, but not one of them applied to our man. There is a certain amount of relaxation, fresh air, and outdoor beauty to be found at a race track, but Mr. D did not indulge himself in these. He was not interested in horses — to look at, breed, ride, or feed lumps of sugar. Neither the heady companionship of sporting men nor the stunning costumes of their women called out to anything in Mr. D. He was certainly not a financial exhibitionist (which many big bettors are). For when Mr. D made a big winning he had to be just as secretive about it as he had to be over the dismal fact that as the years rolled by he was losing all the money he owned and all the money he was earning. Finally, he could not have been playing fourteen races a day to get rich. He was not like the colored charwoman. He understood the whole business.

Most people vaguely suspect that if you make as many bets as Mr. D you will probably lose. There is a much smaller number of people, gifted with some mathematical maturity, who know that if anyone persists in this way against a stiff percentage he *must* go broke. The only variable in the equation is how long it will take. They know that this result is not something that will probably happen, or will happen to someone else. The science of permutations, when working on a large sampling, never makes mistakes. The science of permutations announced dispassionately, when Mr. D began his noiseless orgy, that Mr. D would wind up terribly busted. And Mr. D, ever since his college days, *has understood all this perfectly*.

Several times friends diffidently tried to point out to Mr. D where he was heading, and Mr. D invariably changed the subject. Mr. D did not need anybody to tell him some elementary mathematical truths that he had known for years. Mr. D required the services of a mental therapist to tell him something he did *not* know, and which was vastly more important: what was causing him to act in this suicidal manner.

It isn't important, but in this case it took Mr. D three and one-half years to lose his savings, his earnings, and his job. He then played on credit until he owed the bookmakers some thousands. At this point the bookmakers' agents hinted that he might find himself at the bottom of a river in a bag of cement some night. Mr. D then desisted from horse playing. (The bookmakers weren't really serious; they had all his money, and what more can be asked of any client?) It is not correct to say that at this point Mr. D was "cured" of his obsession. Is an alcoholic "cured" when he is wrecked

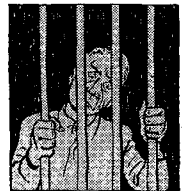
on a desert island where there are no fermentable juices?

If anyone wants to read another case history similar to Mr. D's, but far more convincing, perceptive, and interesting, he is referred to *The Gambler*, by Feodor Mikhaylovich Dostoevski.

Precisely why Mr. D, or the young nobleman under the Tsars, or hundreds of thousands of Americans at this moment behave in this tragic pattern, and what should and can be done about it, are beyond the scope of these observations. Their modest purpose is to suggest that the compulsive gambler is just as sick a personality as the compulsive drinker. The alcoholic is not driven to his destructive, semi-suicidal actions by a craving for whiskey, but by a craving for the annihilation of his own personality which has proved offensive to him in some unacknowledged but utterly convincing way. It is even clearer that there can be nothing like a physical "craving" to kneel in greed and terror in a circle of crapshooters, or to sit sweating in a circle of fashionable roulette or chemin-de-fer players.

No, when the gambler acts neurotically his action is the product of various malaises — a few obvious, the majority buried. It may be the fruits of humiliation in the world's competition, or a dread of entering that competition; it may be the product of a profound but unacknowledged despair. Superimposed on all this, and apparently contradictory, there will at the same time usually be found an elephantine ego bemused with the notion that the gambler is destiny's darling and that the laws of mathematics will be repealed, for *him* alone, by a cheering legislature. The hateful suspicion that perhaps he could not make his way in an office from nine to five is sternly banished; he substitutes the rosier notion that he is so smart that he doesn't have to work at all. Above all, he is the enthusiastic subscriber to the "flight from reality." He never wearies of daydreaming of himself as a fantastic winner.

The thick books contain little on the neurosis of gambling. Few mental therapists know much about gambling, and no gamblers voluntarily present themselves for treatment, because, as I have said, the gambler considers himself a person qualified to give advice, not to seek it. That

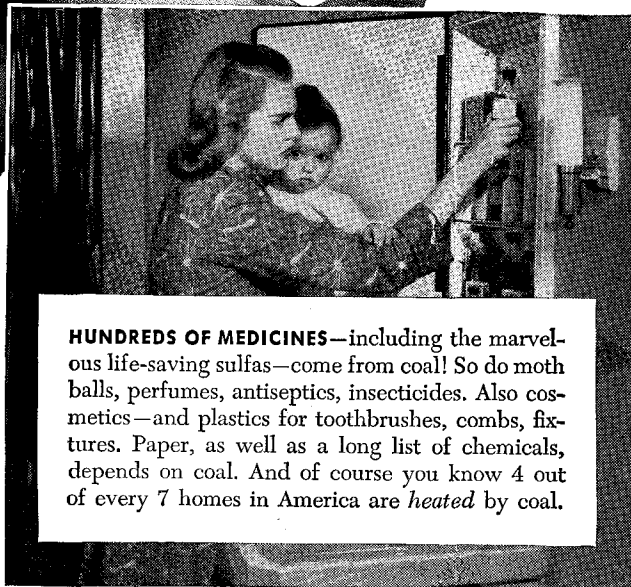


COAL?

IN EVERY ROOM OF
MY HOUSE?



YES, MRS. AMERICA, an amazing number of the everyday things you live with, use, depend on—come from Bituminous Coal. Dyes to color your clothing, curtains, rugs, upholstery . . . wonderful synthetic fabrics such as nylons . . . paints and varnishes for woodwork and furniture. In most homes, electricity generated from coal supplies lights—runs the radio, telephone, vacuum cleaner, sewing machine.



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1. 61.2 per cent of the average sales dollar per ton of Bituminous Coal goes for labor. The gross profit, per ton, averages about 9 cents.
2. Coal is essential in making all steel—about a ton and a half of coal being required for the production of every ton of steel.
3. From coal comes *saccharin*, with its sweetening power 300 to 500 times that of sugar . . . Bituminous Coal Institute, 60 East 42nd Street, New York 17, N. Y.

BITUMINOUS COAL

★ Faithful Servant of Civilization

he and his loved ones are now in a terrible way is not relevant to him. He happens to be in a "temporary losing streak." That this streak has been going on, with unimportant interruptions, for many years is something that he does not care to think about.

I asked one of the doctors to whom I talked this question: "Suppose a compulsive gambler happened to read this article. Would it help him?" The answer was discouraging. "He would not read far. The moment he had an inkling that his own case was about to be discussed he would toss the magazine aside. He would tell himself, with a sort of inverted sincerity, that he didn't find the article interesting."

The Middle Age of Youth

By EDWIN BATEMAN MORRIS

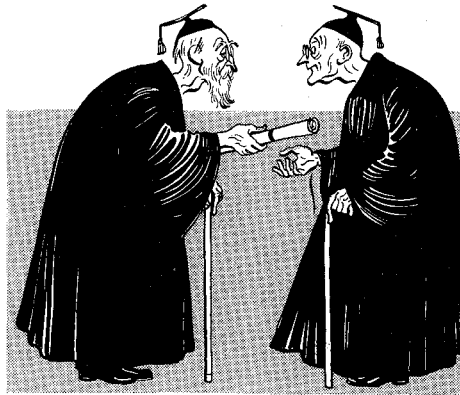
THE universities in the land appear to be a bit discouraged at the short span of life of people — particularly at the short time individuals consent to be young. They are annoyed. Yet they should not be: they have the whole span of life of each aspirant for degree.

There was a time when mistaken emphasis was placed upon the age of twenty-one. It was the time when the curtain parted to let starry-eyed youth, trained in theory, enter the arena for practical combat. For many years the universities mistakenly worshiped at this shrine. Their thinking was warped by the conviction that youth was a period for acquiring education, maturity for making use of it.

In those bitter days they were compelled to arrange their affairs so that doctors and lawyers were ready for entry into the world of service about the time they came of age. A tedious restriction!

The universities were uncomfortable. They did a good job and their graduates were good doctors, good lawyers, good chemists, good engineers, as shining records attested. But educators felt that they were constricted. Here was a system they could not change, and they were embarrassed at their impotence to do anything but the quick and the efficient.

EDWIN BATEMAN MORRIS, a native of Philadelphia and a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, now lives in Bethesda, Maryland. He was formerly associated with the Office of the Supervising Architect in the Federal government.



Then came the brilliant thought that there is no fixed line between Youth and Maturity. Youth is the period we, the educators, require to complete education. Maturity is what is left over. Simplicity itself! Why had it never been thought of before?

The graduation line, the last awarding of the last degree, began at once to be pushed up — so successfully that now when you send a present to a graduating doctor you send it to a balding and graying old fellow, still physically active and as young as he feels, but with his time in the arena considerably cut. When, in a year or so, you go to his wedding, you can see that both bride and groom, brave and gay, are inclined to avoid that draft across the chancel.

The couple will push aside the Curtain of Life with a mature, middle-aged point of view. This progress must not be lost. The universities must, as the years go by, move the final graduation day further and further into old age. They must put more energy behind the theorem of Education for

Leadership, which suggests upping of university entrance requirements. If the preparatory schools have to teach more, it will take them more time, require more years, push final graduation further along.

It is hard to say whether one should second the contention, supported by many, that some manifestation of age, such as rheumatism, should be required for final degree. At any rate the universities must not relax.

They must not fail to ask, if and when coming military training takes a year or so, that they be allowed to move further, on that account, into the middle age of their students. It will be suggested, because of the scarcity of years, that they unreasonably reduce their vacation and holiday span to 40 per cent. They will be asked — horrid thought — to make lectures interesting and to condense lectures to save precious time. They must resist. Are Ph.D. degrees given to make professors interesting?

Final graduation day can be pushed up and up into the years — to the age of forty, to forty-five. When graduation shall have reached the glorious age of forty-five, and when business retirement age, now dropping, shall have reached the age of fifty, there will be but five years for graduates from the great founts of learning to battle with the hard world.

A problem will be presented when graduation becomes fifty and retirement forty-five. But the universities, moving on, will be able to manage.

The Reverse

By OSCAR WILLIAMS

HAVING tired of the printed page,
I turned the book upside down.
Everything is interesting
In the mirror of perversity.

The *w* crossed its little hands on its stomach.
The *i*'s dots hung like a flock of birds
Disappearing into the bottomless grave of white.
The script was dazzling and unreadable.

Commas were quotation marks, confirming the
suspicion
That everything said had been said elsewhere.
Like trees over water washing faces in jigsaw re-
flections,
The foliage of words washed its face in patterns.

Platitudes were flash ultimatums of sleight-of-hand,
The commonest word alive like a caterpillar.
There must be a dizzy reverse to everything,
With the silver linings all babbling of bedrock!

"From the Novel by . . ."

By THEODORE PRATT

NO HOLLYWOOD cam-
era turns over with-
out a story. The whole
vast electric train sys-
tem is stymied until the
story starts. And the
novelist is the boy with
the story. But most
novelists — contrary to
their expressed views —
are likely to look up,
economically speaking, to Hollywood, instead of re-
garding it as only one branch of the business side of
their trade. Unless he is a big enough seller to be
content with his royalty earnings, the novelist is too
often awed by the thought of selling his book to
pictures for a whopping sum. This interferes with
his perspective in approaching the market and con-
summating a sale to the best advantage.

If he is lucky he will be in the hands of an experi-
enced agent, who preferably should be a specialist
in this field. Literary agents often call in screen
agents on a split-commission basis for their clients.
Except for big properties, which almost every studio
wants, it is advisable to have representation in

THEODORE PRATT has sold three of his novels to Hollywood and
has worked in the studios. Duell, Sloan & Pearce is publishing
his new novel, *Miss Dilly Says No*.

Hollywood, on the ground, where a fast check of the
interest at all studios can be made before reaching
the quick decisions it is frequently necessary to
make. The novelist doesn't have to be there, but
his agent should have ready access not only to studio
story editors but to a string of producers. In this
way, also, "package deals" consisting of story and
star, and sometimes even the director and producer
thrown in, can be arranged.

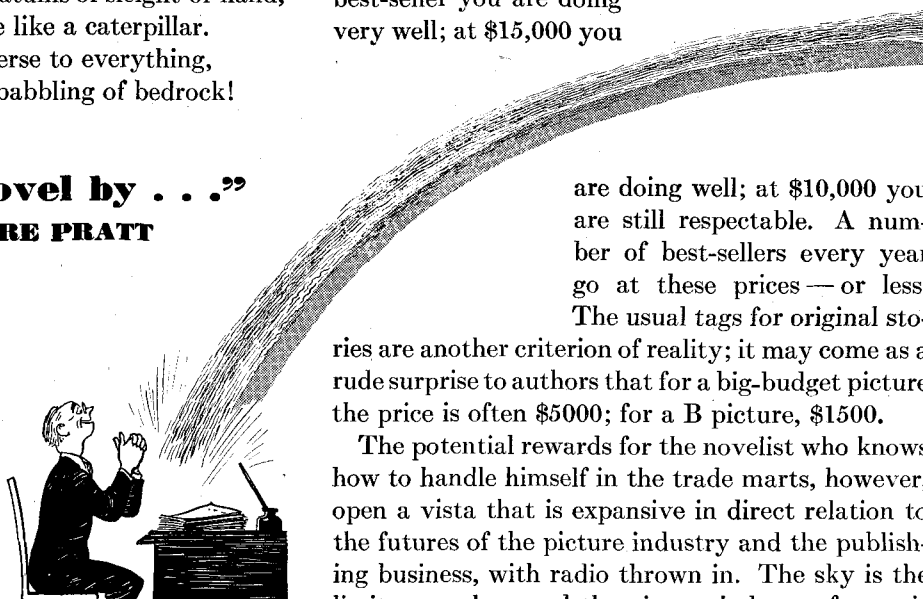
From then on it is a horse trade, with excellent
traders on either side and the novelist in the middle.
Frequently he gets squeezed. The large prices —
the ones we hear about — are few and far between.
Below the much publicized \$200,000 paid for a
novel, the run-of-the-mill sale is comparatively so
modest that it is painful — and slightly embarrass-
ing to the false-front glamour of Hollywood. The
everyday prices range from a few thousand to an
occasional \$25,000. If you get \$20,000 for your non-
best-seller you are doing
very well; at \$15,000 you

are doing well; at \$10,000 you
are still respectable. A num-
ber of best-sellers every year
go at these prices — or less.

The usual tags for original sto-
ries are another criterion of reality; it may come as a
rude surprise to authors that for a big-budget picture
the price is often \$5000; for a B picture, \$1500.

The potential rewards for the novelist who knows
how to handle himself in the trade marts, however,
open a vista that is expansive in direct relation to
the futures of the picture industry and the publish-
ing business, with radio thrown in. The sky is the
limit on each — and the picture industry future is
tied in with whatever television evolves. In time
this combination should offer audiences for the
novelist's work that would have made Mr. Dickens
gape. Together with what is promised in the future
mass distribution of books, which will enhance their
picture and television values, it makes the literary
mind reel.

The novelist's trading position is handicapped by
the fact that he has no strong organization, like the
Dramatists' Guild or the Screenwriters' Guild, to
back him up. The Authors' Guild of the Authors'
League is not a tightly-knit club, and can put no
pressure whatsoever on the studios. This lack is
largely a question of money for proper organiza-
tion. The situation is regrettable, for the amount
necessary would be mere fingernail parings of addi-
tional sums the studios could be persuaded to pay



for story properties if there were such an organization.

Even without a guild that has enough teeth to bite anything, the author independently faces a rosy future in selling his goods to Hollywood. The immediate picture is brightened by the fact that the producers during the war are able to throw almost anything on film, with little requirement to buy novels, to show a profit. That situation will no longer hold. In addition, because longer runs are possible than in boomless peacetime, fewer pictures need to be made and fewer stories purchased. That condition, too, will pass.

Certain trade practices are being recognized as, to put it mildly, hardly according to Hoyle. If a studio really wants a story, it is no longer necessary for the novelist to agree abjectly that the studio buys his characters and the right to make as many

sequels as it likes without further payment. Only one picture, or remakes of the same version, need be allowed. Recently a studio which actually had the right to make sequels of a best-seller without paying the author further money recognized how unethical the arrangement was and paid the author the same sum as for the original purchase.

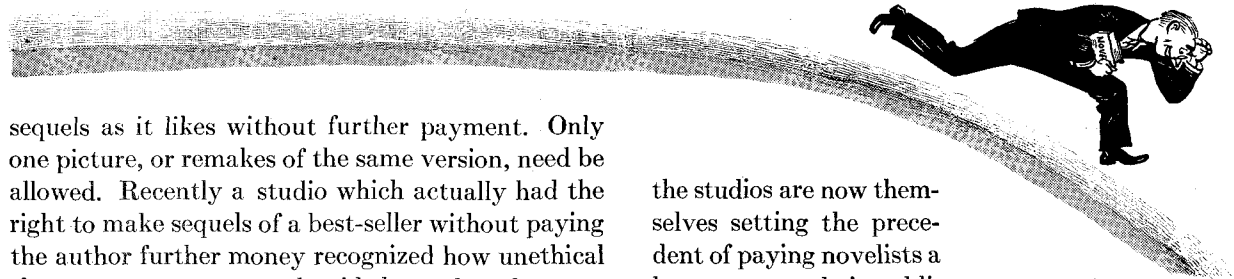
Another thing going by the board is the practice of giving an author twenty-four hours to accept an offer, and threatening to cut the offer in half or withdraw it entirely unless it is accepted before the deadline. Soon, perhaps, announcing that \$80,000 has been paid, instead of the \$20,000 actually paid, will be generally recognized as being a bad trade practice. It has proved to be a sad public relations practice, with the public skeptical about such things and believing no announced price.

Even with these and other reforms in the relations of the studios with novelists, there still remains a long way to go before the novelist, from his point of view, receives an equitable share for what he contributes. In the matter of credits alone it is long past time for the novelist to obtain better recognition. At present his name on the billing is second in importance to that of the screenwriters, a purely Hollywood point of view. A more logical handling is the practice followed by British film makers, who list the title, next credit the author, and then follow with the names of the screenwriters.

Few authors enjoy the delightful spots occupied by the popular Rex Beach and Edna Ferber, who get large sums for a one-picture lease on their works. Then the rights revert to them to be sold again in future years, as Beach has already done.

Except in other rare instances the novelist's share has been judged on the picture market value of his book and the trading ability he and his agent show at the time of the sale. Disparities for books of apparently equal value are enormous, as witness the \$8500 paid for *Guadalcanal Diary* and the \$100,000 for *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo*. Also, inexperience of both author and agent accounts for jumping at the first offer that comes along or, in some tragic cases, for avariciously and unwisely being so grasping that the studios bow out and the cash register rings up a resounding "No sale!"

The fairest method, seemingly, of judging the worth of a book for pictures is to base it upon some kind of sliding scale, paying the author on the basis of the royalties he is paid for book publication. Several methods of doing this are coming to the fore. After bitterly opposing the practice for years,



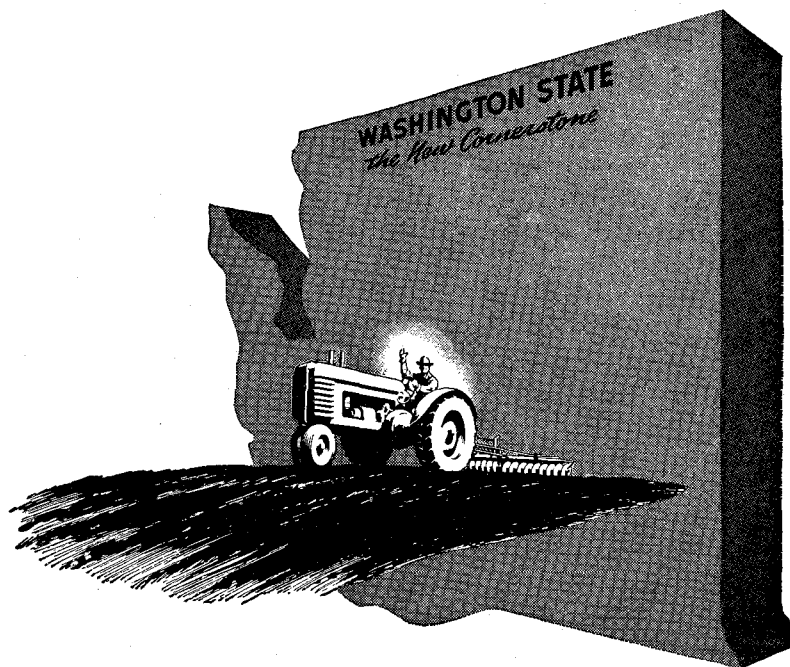
the studios are now themselves setting the precedent of paying novelists a lump sum and, in addition, so much more for every copy the published book sells, up to a stated limit.

Hemingway was one of the first to get this attractive deal. He was in a position to force it with his *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. The luscious MGM novel prize of \$125,000 makes this provision for additional payment. Twentieth Century-Fox's payments for stories by servicemen follow the same procedure. With the studios making such offers, more and more novelists should be able to include the method in their picture sale contracts.

The latest kind of deal coming into favor is based directly upon the popularity of a book in various fields. This arrangement is usually made before publication or even while the work is in progress. A flat sum is paid to tie up the book for the interested studio. The contract reads that so much additional is to be paid for each of stated levels of sales the book reaches, with a whopping sum if it goes over 100,000; also sizable lump sums are paid if the book is distributed by one of the book clubs, if it is serialized in a national magazine, if it is widely syndicated or reprinted in a cheap edition. Hollywood, interested in tangibles, pays for two things: proof of popular appeal and a ready-made audience.

All these arrangements are certainly better than the usual haphazard horse trades. But being arbitrary instead of exact measurements of a story's

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Washington has the *agricultural resources* to provide many of these industries with *vital raw materials!* And . . . the world's greatest irrigation projects will add many *hundreds of thousands of additional acres* of rich, virgin farm land in the next few years. Cheap, abundant *hydroelectric power* is an additional attraction for *Plastics, Chemurgy, and Light Metals.*

Planners of post-war industry, set your industrial roots where they will grow—in the *Best of the Good Earth*—in the State of Washington!

WASHINGTON
The New Cornerstone



WASHINGTON—THE STATE—HAS *Everything!*



DIVERSIFIED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION—fruits, grains, livestock, vegetables, dairy products.



SKILLED LABOR—intelligent, responsible, fair in its dealings with management.



IMMENSE SOURCES OF RAW MATERIALS—minerals, timber, fuels, water power, etc.



UNEXCELLED TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES—by land, sea and air . . . in all directions . . . deep-water harbors.



ABUNDANT, CHEAP, HYDROELECTRIC POWER FOR INDUSTRY—vast, interconnected hydroelectric systems.



GATEWAY TO THE GREAT POSTWAR PACIFIC MARKETS—the Orient, Alaska, Russia, Canada, South America.



NUMEROUS BASIC INDUSTRIES—provide materials for processing.



PLEASANT LIVING—a temperate, healthful climate, ideal for both working and living.



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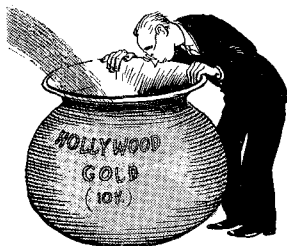
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worth for its picture version, they still leave much to be desired. There have been instances of books which could have only a very modest sale, — with no hope of book club, reprint, serialization, or syndicate distribution, — and were sold to pictures for as little as \$500, which returned, in their movie versions, a net profit of over a million dollars.

Should, or should not, the author receive some of this enormous profit? The picture company can argue on the negative side that \$500 was all the property was worth at the time of the purchase; that the company's screenwriters, stars, investment, showmanship, experience, and distribution accounted for the size of the profit. The author can argue that the intrinsic values in his story accounted for a part of the profit and therefore he should share proportionately.

The ideal arrangement is a flat payment to the novelist for the right of the picture company to make his book into a movie, and also a percentage of profits. Unfortunately, a novelist's utopia is difficult to achieve and is not the same as that of a picture studio. What this percentage should be, upon what based, is hard to say. The accounting of the profits raises another question that is just as hard. Already shrewd screenwriters in a position to obtain it are taking a percentage of picture earnings in preference to salary. Sometimes this percentage is given by independent producers, operating on a shoestring, as their only way to obtain good stories, writers, directors, and stars. When a "sleeper" — that is, an unexpectedly successful picture — comes through, everybody collects a small fortune.



Meanwhile the novelist-studio relationship is one of mutual enmity. But they are not natural enemies, for they complement each other too closely. Each can benefit by a clarification of their dealings.

Return

By LUELLA BOYNTON

Too quietly the hour comes
Of your returning to this door.
I want the heralding of drums
And trumpet call, and wine to pour.

Hearts have not changed since ancient days
When lonely women watched the sky
To see a certain beacon blaze
That said their lord had ridden by.

"Ici Londres"

By HAROLD NICOLSON

ON A Sunday night last fall "Jacques Duchesne" — a *nom de guerre* which had masked the identity of the famous actor and producer Michel St. Denis — said farewell to the London microphone and disbanded the team which for four arduous years maintained and stimulated the spirit of the French people. It may be doubted whether in the history of wireless anything more brilliant or effective has ever been transmitted than the nightly programs sent out from London under the title "Les Français Parlent aux Français."



The credit for this achievement — and it will forever remain one of the most remarkable achievements of psychological warfare — rests mainly with Duchesne himself. The team which he gathered around him — men like Jacques Borel, Pierre Bourdan, Jean Marin, Jean Oberlé, and Maurice Van Moppès — was a brilliant team, composed of ardent and gifted workers. He had with him several British assistants who gave him loyal and affectionate service, and the British authorities, as he himself generously admitted in his farewell, "not only respected, but organized, his liberty." Yet in the last resort it was upon his strong and solid shoulders that rested, day in and day out, night in and night out, the full weight and burden of that tremendous task.

He had to gain the confidence of a people who had been shocked by military disaster, humiliated by enemy occupation, and confused by the constant and insidious propaganda put out by Philippe Henriot and his Vichy assistants. He had to catch and retain the attention of men and women in a country in which listening to foreign broadcasts was a criminal offense, in which all foreign stations were studiously jammed. And he had to maintain courage at a time when hope appeared to be fantastic and when night after night Pierre Bourdan was obliged to introduce his bulletin with the words: "The news today is very bad indeed."

The technique which he adopted would not have been successful had he not been able to bring to it the resources of an acute intelligence, a deep human sympathy, and a vivid imagination. He realized that his compatriots were at first too stunned by

Son of a British diplomat and himself a participant in the peacemaking at Versailles, HAROLD NICOLSON is a member of the Board of Governors of the BBC.

The little boy who wasn't afraid

THEY SAY a baby has only two instinctive fears—that of a loud sound and that of loss of balance. You've seen a baby "jump" at a big noise—you've felt his baby hands clutch tight from fear of falling.

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misery to be receptive of any but the lightest forms of invective or the gentlest forms of stimulation. He realized that the difficulties of reception in France would render his audience unwilling to listen to long rhetorical discourses or to detailed descriptions of the war production of Great Britain and the United States. He realized from the outset that there was one thing which he could provide which neither Vichy nor the Germans could ever provide, and that was the unvarnished truth. He thus, in the dark years, gained the confidence and increased the numbers of his audience by providing them with news bulletins of almost stark realism.

His most brilliant device during the months of despair was to cast his anti-Vichy and anti-German propaganda into easy little nursery rhymes sung to easy nursery tunes. A second device was the brilliant dialogue of "Les Trois Amis" in which the falsifications of Vichy propaganda were exposed in the form of witty conversations between three typical Frenchmen. Any more formidable denunciation would have been almost intolerable to the shattered nerves of those whom, between 1940 and 1942, he was seeking to convince. By the form which he adopted he aroused nostalgic longing for the old France of nursery tradition and the old France of sparkling logic, while bringing his method into sharp contradiction to the invective and denunciations of the Germans and the Vichyssois. He gave his audience truth, amusement, and repose.

It is interesting, on looking back, to note the subtle gradations through which the transmissions in French from London passed from comfort, through exhortation, to the final call to arms. Already on June 4, 1940, a Frenchman who had happened to tune in to London would have heard the defiant words: "Nous nous battons sur les plages, nous nous battons dans les champs et dans les rues, nous nous battons dans les montagnes. Nous ne nous rendrons jamais." Great Britain, in Winston Churchill, had found her Clemenceau.

On June 17 Marshal Pétain, in a quavering voice, informed his countrymen that France had suffered total defeat and that he had asked for an armistice. On the following night from London he was answered by another voice, a voice vibrating with resolve, the voice of General de Gaulle: "I am General de Gaulle speaking to you from London. France has lost a battle, she has not lost the war. Believe me — and I speak to you as one who knows — when I tell you that for France nothing has been irretrievably lost. The same methods which have



now defeated us will one day bring us victory. Let France unite with Britain, who commands the sea and who fights on. This war has not been settled by the Battle of France." This little taper-light in the darkness became, as the years went by, a bonfire by which, in the year of victory, the maquis was inflamed.

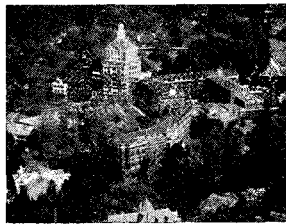
Gradually the French transmissions from London became, to use the phrase employed by Jacques Duchesne in his farewell, "the voice of French tradition; the voice that does not deceive." Gradually a more active policy was introduced. By 1942 a voice began to twine itself in and out of the music of French popular songs, a voice which whispered insistently, "Demoralize them, demoralize them, demoralize them!" When Laval's press-gang started to recruit forced labor for Germany this voice became more urgent. "Do not go to Germany!" it hissed. "Do not go to Germany! Do not go to Germany!" The V campaign followed, and the most ingenious variations were suggested for the three shorts and a long. And night by night strange messages swung across the ether: "The elephant has grown another tail; I repeat it twice; the elephant has grown another tail," and the people of France realized that some vast underground was at work.

We have had many stories since then of the actual effect upon the French people, and upon the resistance movement, of the programs devised and directed by Jacques Duchesne. The members of his team became popular heroes in France long before D Day. When some of them joined the expeditionary force and landed in Normandy they were accorded a popular ovation. In one village in Normandy the mayor gathered the villagers together in order to present Jacques Duchesne's son with an enormous bouquet. At Barfleur, André Rabache was greeted by a deputation headed by the town band. At La Ferté in the Sarthe the whole town turned out to greet Pierre Bourdan.

Throughout all this Duchesne himself maintained his accustomed calm. Only once in these four years have I seen him even faintly flustered. It was on the morning of Friday, August 25, 1944. On Wednesday night we had heard General Koenig's report that Paris had been liberated; throughout Thursday contradictory rumors had been circulating; on that Friday morning anxiety still prevailed. I found Duchesne in his office looking pale and strained. Our monitoring service had managed to pick up a few mangled messages being sent out from a small wireless installed in the Hôtel de Ville; they were not encouraging. As Duchesne turned them over,

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THE ROOSEVELT

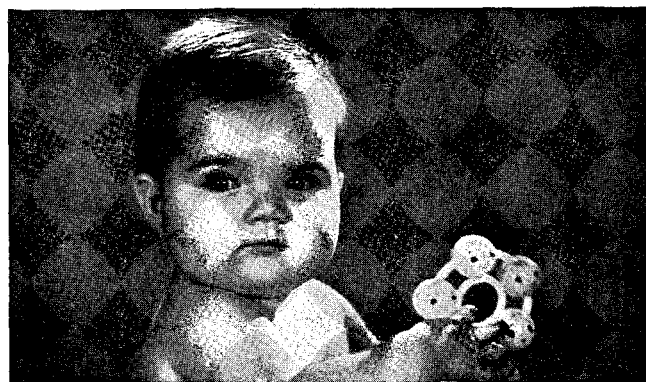
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making plans.

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case you'll want to be in a position to

give him a little help if he needs it.

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gets the same chance as other boys,
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boy's future, and your country.

Try to buy more bonds than you ever
have before. And hold on to them
until they come due!

This is an official U. S. Treasury advertisement — prepared under
auspices of Treasury Department and War Advertising Council

his fingers trembled slightly. And then one of his staff entered with another sheet in his hand and his eyes aflame. Duchesne read the message and passed it to me without a word. "General Leclerc's division has entered the city," I read. "The bells of Notre Dame are ringing out our liberation." Duchesne stretched his arms upwards with all the weariness of four exiled years. "Enfin," he said.

Of all the tributes which I have heard, the most convincing came to me from a French friend who had spent three years in occupied France and who had then escaped. "It is a curious thing," he said, "but all my life the word 'Londres' has suggested somewhat dark associations — fog, and low clouds, and the smell of petrol and tobacco. But now it suggests light and hope and truth and freedom. You will never know what those two words meant to us; those two words 'Ici Londres.'"

I told this story to Duchesne. "You have done a great job for your country," I said. "You must feel satisfied." He paused for a moment. "Yes," he answered.

The Chandler Books

By D. C. RUSSELL

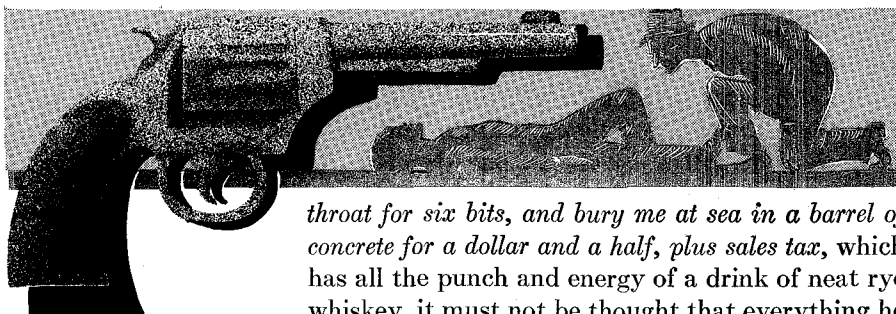
A LITTLE over a year ago two friends, almost simultaneously, suggested I might find a new experience by reading the mystery novels of Raymond Chandler. Being mixed up, by nature of my profession, in literary affairs I thanked them enthusiastically and forgot about the matter. Words to me are beautiful and wonderful things, but there are times when they seem as appetizing as a full meal with wines must seem to a gourmet who has just finished an eight-course dinner. In the end one of my friends, a determined fellow, deposited two Chandler novels in my house — thus strategically undermining any possible form of resistance. I now wish to make a public apology to my friends for my delaying tactics, and should like to record my gratitude to Raymond Chandler for what is, indeed, a new experience in mystery novels.

It is a new experience because Chandler writes not out of habit and not with synthetic materials, as do so many mystery writers, but with an artistry of craftsmanship and a realism that can rank him

with many a famous novelist. In his hands, words do become beautiful and wonderful things, operating with economy and precision. What a delight it is to come upon a writer who tosses off a good image on almost every page. Here is an old man whose *few locks of dry white hair clung to his scalp like wild flowers fighting for life on a bare rock*; a woman who *looked as if she would have a hall bedroom accent*; cops *in slickers that shone like gun barrels*; a face that *fell apart like a bride's pie crust*; a blonde to *make a bishop kick a hole in a stained glass window*; a voice getting *as cool as a cafeteria dinner or one made for talking over an eight party line*.

These have been picked at random by leafing through the pages of Chandler's novels, and I could have found three times as many of equal intensity and caliber if I had taken more time, for Chandler is prodigal in his imagery. If they seem more wisecracks than high-flown literary similes, I will point out that Chandler writes the characteristic American speech and uses characteristic American humor. In doing this he comes closer to literature than other writers who disdain the native brand of thought and language.

If Chandler on the one hand produces a sentence like this: *The eighty-five cent dinner tasted like a discarded mail bag and was served to me by a waiter who looked as if he would slug me for a quarter, cut my*



throat for six bits, and bury me at sea in a barrel of concrete for a dollar and a half, plus sales tax, which has all the punch and energy of a drink of neat rye whiskey, it must not be thought that everything he writes is so tough and hard. There are descriptive passages that a poet might envy; and phrases such as *old men with faces like lost battles* or *a lawn flowing like a cool green tide around a rock* or *the surf curled and creamed almost without sound, like a thought trying to form itself on the edge of consciousness* have a beauty which shows that Chandler cannot be pigeonholed merely as an expert in tough language.

There is more of the tough language in Chandler's works than of the other kind, but this is because he writes of a world and order of society in which there is little beauty or serenity. He has a theory about mystery novels which is best explained by one of his own dedications: —

In memory of the time when we were trying to get murder away from the upper classes, the week-end house party and the vicar's rose-garden, and back to the people who are really good at it.

Our readers will recall D. C. RUSSELL's memoir of his father, "Æ," which appeared in the February, 1943, *Atlantic*.

He believes, and rightly I think, that most murder stories no longer have any relation to real life — that they have become a literary form and convention remote from realism. If we were to judge from most murder stories, murders are most prevalent among the middle and upper classes and as often as not are solved, not by the police, but by private individuals possessed of bulging brains and a vast assortment of strange knowledges. It is manifestly ridiculous. Chandler in his works has returned to that world where murder is a commonplace: the world of racketeers in drugs and liquor, in gambling and prostitution; a world in which police and racketeers and politicians are often mixed up in sub-surface alliances. It is not a bad thing that we should be told about the murky depths of our civilization, that this realism should be Chandler's subject, for, as we well know, this is indeed the area of American society in which murder is most frequent.

It is strange to meet a murder-novel writer who attacks his work with the earnest attention and serious social thought which are supposed to be the prerogative of eminent novelists. This is what Chandler does; and, so doing, he has removed his work from the realm of merely conventional entertainment to the point where it becomes a serious study of a certain kind of American society. This quality, and a grim sense of humor allied with an even grimmer sense of realism, — for example, his description of the seedy Fulwider Building in *The Big Sleep*, — plus a superb writing ability, have produced five novels which are worth the attention of more readers than just those alone who are interested in the literature of murder.

I must, as a matter of logic, point out that Mr. Chandler's theory leads him into a rut. If he sticks to it he will also have to stick to writing about a certain type of society and a certain type of people. In time readers will get tired of this. Worse still, even Mr. Chandler will get tired by the monotony of his literary landscape, and his interest in his own work will diminish — I do indeed fancy I see a dimming of vitality in the last two books. There is a point where a theory may become a hindrance, and I should be glad to see Mr. Chandler trying a few experiments. He might meditate on murdering some of the people he secretly thinks ought to be killed off. A fair amount of good literature has consisted of secret desires and thoughts externalized in words.

Mr. Chandler has done his vigorous best to explode the empty convention behind ordinary murder stories, but he ought not to set up a convention for himself. We who read three or four shockers a week can't stand monotony in murder.

The Old Mandarin

"Translations from the Chinese"

By CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

CLASS DISMISSED

One of his lovely pupils
Studying Chinese classics
Said, "It occurs to me,
What is the feminine for *Mandarin*?"

"It occurs to me,"
Said the Old Mandarin gallantly,
"You are."



DIM VIEW

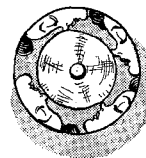
"I've been reading," said Poo Pitty Sing,
"The *Journal to Stella*.
Gosh, what letters
The Dean did write her;
But I take rather
A dim view of Stella:
What did she have
That I haven't got?"



She had Jonathan Swift.

UNCONSCIOUS FELICITY

Often imperfect in American idiom
The O.M. amuses his students:
Work hard, my dears, he advises;
Keep your nose to the groundstone.



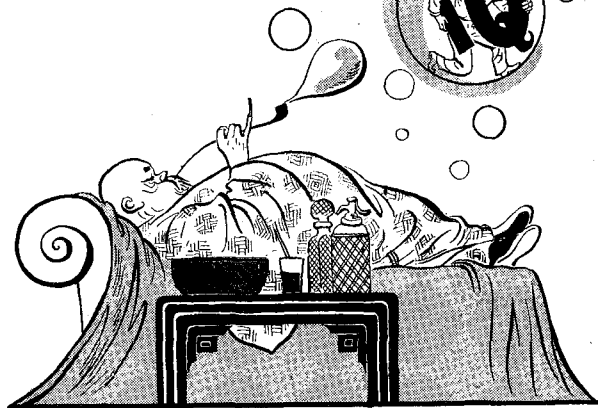
LOOKING FOR THE SWATTER

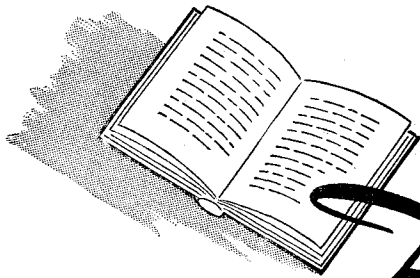
Nothing is trivial:
One bluebottle fly
Touring aimlessly round the ceiling
Can prevent a whole poem
From being written.



THE MAINSPRING

I know what keeps people going.
It's the thought everyone sometimes has:
"Wouldn't it be wonderful
If I weren't actually as stupid
As I know I really am."





THE ATLANTIC

Bookshelf



THE PERIPATETIC REVIEWER

BY EDWARD WEEKS

THIS is written in the midst of the worst journey in the world. Moving, even if it be only five doors down the street, is a trip retracing half a lifetime; moving in the midst of snowbound Boston, moving the books and magazines (twenty years of the *Atlantic*), the clippings, letters, and papers which time has accumulated over a quarter of a century, is a grim, pensive business.

I am by nature an inveterate collector of papers. I like them around and I put them around. I am a beginner of diaries. I save scraps on which I have jotted ideas for articles or stories, lecture notes, theater programs (if I really enjoyed the play), letters that have given me a kick, and an occasional reminiscent bill. They begin to pile on my bureau top as I empty my inner coat pocket at the day's end; there they gather for several days or weeks, until the mass begins to topple and my wife makes threatening gestures toward the scrap basket; then I submissively place them out of sight, sometimes under heavier objects, sometimes in drawers. This has been going on for a long time, and now they are all coming to light. All.

There is a good deal of sentiment in raking out these embers of the past. You can't just shovel them

into the ash barrel. I can't. I still feel a touch of their warmth. Here is my best round at Ekwanok (83) and the bets won. . . . Here is the diary written so carefully my first two months in France the summer of 1917, and coming to a sudden stop the day we went into action at Verdun (and never resumed). . . . Here is the crisp result of my first College Boards: "Princeton University. This is to certify that at the examinations held in June, 1914, Mr. Edward Weeks received the following grades:—

English A D

Algebra 1 E

Latin 1 E

"A Excellent; B Good; C Passed; D Failure; E Bad Failure"

. . . Here is a dance program of the Emma Willard School (One Step — "Bachelor Girls and Boys"; Fox Trot — "Poor Butterfly"; One Step — "Hello, I've Been Looking for You"). . . . English 5 themes corrected in Dean Briggs's hand. . . . Another pocket diary, this one begun on the cattle boat leaving Montreal. . . . "Cambridge Union Society, Michaelmas Term, 1922. Subject for the Seventh Debate at 8.15 P.M.: 'That European Civilization has failed to justify itself.' Proposed by Mr. D. H. H. Smith, Magdalene College, Opposed by ____." . . . "Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith, *The Beggar's Opera*, by Mr. Gay."

Letters. One from Dean Briggs: "DEAR MR. WEEKS: I liked your work yesterday afternoon but two things in it worry me a little. Except for the dialogue, your voice

was not loud enough for so large an auditorium. If you can make it louder and keep its naturalness (I should be sorry if you lost that!) you will do better. The other thing which worried me was the amount

IN THIS ISSUE

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Reviewed by Mark Schorer

TOMORROW'S BUSINESS · BY BEARDSLEY RUMI
Reviewed by Leo M. Cherne

GREAT SON · BY EDNA FERBER
Reviewed by Dorothy Hillyer

THE HEADMISTRESS · BY ANGELA THIRKELL
Reviewed by Frances Woodward

THE WISE-WRENN CORRESPONDENCE · EDITED BY FANNIE E.
RATCHFORD
Reviewed by George Goodspeed

If you read with your head as well as your heart, if you prefer plain truths to pretty theories, here are two books that will stir you deeply by the truth they speak about the soul of man striving toward decency and justice.

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By Albert Maltz

"a superb work of art... at once a tale of high adventure and a testimony for mankind."—Howard Fast. \$2.75

PREJUDICE

JAPANESE-AMERICANS

Symbol of Racial Intolerance

By Carey McWilliams

"a surgical effort to expose to light and air one of the most terrifying wartime developments." —Bernard DeVoto. \$3.00



Captain from Castile

By Samuel Shellabarger

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of time which you took. I have been telling men that though I have known persons to be given a prize who speak too long, the safe thing is not to be over six minutes." . . . "U. S. Department of Labor, Oklahoma City, June 11, 1920. DEAR SIR: Replying to your recent communication wherein you advise that yourself and others wish to come to the Oklahoma wheat harvest this year. . . . The wages will not be less than \$6.00 a day with board and lodging." . . . One from the president of an advertising agency: "MY DEAR MR. WEEKS: Thank you for your letter of April 11th. I may leave town at noon tomorrow, Friday, and if so of course it will be impossible for me to see you then in the afternoon. But if you are in town, will you be good enough to phone my office, ask for Miss Dunn, and find out whether I have left." Wonder why I kept that twenty years.

"Will you stop mooning!" says that voice I recognize as Authority. "We'll never get out of here at the rate you're going."

Why is it that women have such a phobia against men's papers? It is not just a New England crotchet. On the old Southern plantations the wives swept away, burned up, and destroyed more historical records than the moths and mice together. Yet women keep their love letters, all tied up with red ribbon in a hatbox. They store away in corners every bit of broken china and glass. They treasure baby shoes and Little Things and scraps of silk. But when a husband has an honest hankering for a pile of reverie, they are ruthless.

First books

There's something pensive about moving books. Here in this alcove are my first loves, the beginning library of a hard-up undergraduate, which I picked up for a few shillings at David's Bookstall in the Cambridge market place. Here are the fifth edition of Boswell with the signature cut out of every volume and the copious annotations which I can read but not identify, the Malone Shakespeare which I first saw at the Bodleian, and the small leather Wordsworth I carried with me to the Lakes on that 600-mile bike trip with Morley Dobson. And I begin to notice the absentees. Who the devil has my copy of Francis Thompson's essay on Shelley, that small green volume which always strays from the set? I remember pressing it on someone who had never read it. But who? And my copy of Max Beerbohm's *Seven Men*. I thought I had a first edition. "What's this?" said Dave McCord. "A first of *Seven Men*?" "A first," I said with a touch of pride. "With my name in it," he remarked. "So that's where it has been all these years!"

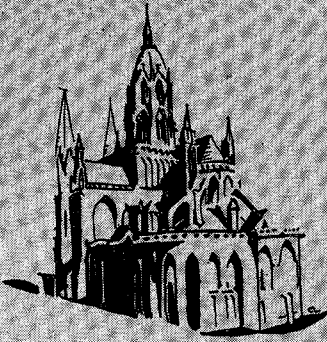
Here are the trail blazers, the books which I picked up that first winter in Greenwich Village — our rooms used to tremble every time the Sixth Avenue El rattled by — the books which were different and exciting to us then. *The Cabala* by a young Yale graduate, Thornton Wilder; *In Our Time*, a collection of short stories coming out of Paris by a former ambulance driver, Ernest Hemingway; a first edition of *The Waste Land* (a man I worked with, an impecunious poet, telling me, "That's the first book I ever stole. I just walked into the Sunwise Turn and swiped it. I had to have it."); Mencken's *Prejudices* and Katherine Mansfield and *The Enormous Room* by E. E. Cummings; Masters's *Spoon River*; and the three books Geoffrey Parsons spoke of in a morning's walk: *Winesburg, Ohio* by Sherwood Anderson, *The Brass Check* by Upton Sinclair, and Frank Harris's *Oscar Wilde* — each came with the impact of discovery.

It never occurred to us in the early twenties that books by and about the American Negro were an unknown quantity. The poems of Countee Cullen, the short stories by Rudolph Fisher, that talented young Negro doctor who died in first flight — these touched the surface. But the Negro was then the stock subject of slapstick comedy — witness the popular fiction of Octavus Roy Cohen. Books like Roland Hayes's *Angel Mo'* and Richard Wright's *Native Son* were a long way in the future.

Black hunger

In my first experience as a juror, I was drawn for a murder trial. The case involved three Negroes, one of whom had been cut to death, and after years of search the supposed killer was before us. He was defended by a Negro lawyer with an eloquent, beautiful voice. "Gentlemen," he would plead to our all-white jury, "I beg of you to put all thought of color, all taint of prejudice, aside. This man has had none of the advantages you've enjoyed. The only law he knows is the law of the savannas, the law of survival, the law of self-defense." So skillfully did he play on our sympathies that our first vote was 10 to 2 for acquittal. It took many hours and a rereading of the evidence to see that in anger, meanness, and liquor the man had killed.

White sympathy for the black underdog has been undependable to say the least. Not until Paul Robeson, Roland Hayes, and Dorothy Maynor had won us with their art; not until publicists like Du Bois, educators like President James E. Shepard of Durham, writers like Richard Wright and Roi Ottley and Robert Weaver, had stirred us by precept and print; not until the huge and by degrees enlightened employment of Negro strength in our war effort,



**"FRANCE IS AN IDEA NECESSARY TO CIVILIZATION
AND WILL LIVE AGAIN WHEN TYRANNY IS SPENT."**

*This was written on July 23,
1940, in the dedication of . . .*

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The engrossing personal story of a woman whose work for the Quakers has led her wherever human beings were shipwrecked by war. She has seen the terrible backwash of three wars with a keen eye, a curious mind, and an understanding heart. \$3.00

The Journal of Mary Hervey Russell

By Storm Jameson

A subtle, restless, and sensitive mind is depicted in this fictional journal of Storm Jameson's leading character. It is a subjective account of life in Europe, of refugee authors, of the first years of this war, translated into clear, sensuous images. \$2.50



THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

did we white Americans begin to open our eyes to those embarrassing questions about the color line in democracy. Negroes with a right to the Purple Heart have an equal right to citizenship and education. Even in Mississippi; even in Tennessee.

To write the record of rough justice, a Negro must pull himself out of the slough of ignorance and rise above the prejudices of his own people and the mortifications of white supremacy. Even today few have come through the ordeal, and those few carry with them an accumulated bitterness. **Black Boy** by **Richard Wright** is, as Dorothy Canfield Fisher truly says, "an honest, dreadful, heart-breaking story of a Negro childhood and youth." It is also a modern story, for the childhood began on the shores of the Mississippi in the year 1909. Richard's father was a shiftless farmhand, a slave in mind if not in body, with no vestige of loyalty towards his wife or family. His mother was struck down by paralysis shortly after her husband had deserted her, and Richard's boyhood was passed in the crowded homes of his relatives, where he lived on charity. He was usually hungry, often strapped and browbeaten by his elders, held back by the most illiterate prejudices, and — because he was a strong boy whose will would not be subdued — mortified again and again by white animosity.

Good schooling was out of reach. There was no one to befriend him. What he learned about human nature, he learned in the barrooms, as a water boy, in the hotel lobbies where he worked as a bellhop, in the doing of odd jobs which kept his head just above water. He was goaded by curiosity and by the unshakable belief that some day, somewhere, he would be free to speak his mind. But that meant he had first to escape from his family in the South. And to escape he had to earn the hundred dollars which would take him North.

How far Mr. Wright has traveled since those early days in Memphis stands clearly revealed in the telling and terrifying passages of this book. Mr. Wright is not the first Negro to write of his emancipation with power and beauty. *Father Henson's Story*, for which Mrs. Stowe wrote the Introduction in 1858, is a Negro classic of the underground of that day and of the physical tyranny an American Negro could overcome if he had the mind and will. Like Father Henson, Richard Wright traveled a painful road, though his torture was more mental, before he could come into the clear.

Indeed, Mr. Wright has come so far from his beginning that I am not sure that I always trust his hindsight. I find it hard to believe that a boy of four would so calmly and surely set fire to his family's cabin, and that a boy of nine would have

heard no word about the First World War then being fought. In his concentration on the poverty, the foulness, and the terror in which he was brought up, the author almost completely ignores those tentacles of natural affection which must have held him and his mother together in their misery. There is a curious detachment in this book, as if the author had so covered up his affection that it can no longer be revealed. "During the day," he writes of one painful episode, "I overreacted to each event, my banked emotions spilling around it. I refused to talk to anyone about my affairs, because I knew that I would only hear a justification of the ways of the white folks and I did not want to hear it. I lived carrying a huge wound, tender, festering, and I shrank when I came near anything that I thought would touch it." Readers should remember that such wounds have made this man indignant and tight-lipped. They should accept this book with all its imperfections as a stark, powerful proclamation that black ignorance is being dispelled in our time. What is white America doing to help?

The underdogs of Europe

The enormous suffering which the civilians of Europe have endured is a story which cannot be too often told to us in our unmarred country. Their endurance has reached the breaking point; ours has not. The more willing we are to "bear and forbear" the more able we shall be to cope with the short tempers and angry aspirations which burst into the open as the German oppression is removed. In his novel, *Arrival and Departure*, Arthur Koestler made a striking revelation of the exile state of mind, in this case exiles in Portugal. The next assignment is to tell Americans of the people who could not escape.

Robert St. John is an American correspondent who hotfooted it through the Balkans one jump ahead of Hitler. As he watched the German blitz mow down the Graustark equipment of the Yugoslavs, he gathered the material for his AP dispatches and his forthright and blazing chronicle *From the Land of Silent People*. In that experience one gathers that Mr. St. John himself turned from the cynicism of a hardened journalist to become the partisan of the underdogs of Central Europe. And this transformation of reporter to partisan becomes the theme of his short first novel, *It's Always Tomorrow*. His hero, a tough young reporter from Chicago, loves liquor and secretaries, especially Yashna ("dark, with a strange beauty"); his characters, newspapermen all, have names which are strangely familiar — Leland, White, Sedgwick, Cecil — but no individuality; and his story, as it skips from Warsaw to Budapest to Paris to London,

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is too hurried and implausible to convey anything like the indignation which prompted his book of reporting. His account of the German strafing of the roads and his diatribe against the black markets are genuine enough. But for the rest this is a goulash of implausibility and autobiography, warmed over in a chafing dish, between assignments.

Apartment in Athens is the work of an American novelist, Glenway Wescott, writing at long range and out of compassion for the Greeks. Its subject is as timely as its sympathy. Here is the nightmare of German occupation told in the dreary, daily details of a single household in Athens. The story begins with a Prussian officer's taking over the apartment in a manner as gross and as brutal as one can easily imagine. The Greeks under him are a family of four, a Milquetoast of a publisher (he must have had a darn good secretary to do his work!) who is soon reduced to impotent irony, his invalid wife who weeps at the drop of a hat, and two half-starved children in whom, one gathers, the hope of Greece resides. It is, I think, a proof of Mr. Wescott's craftsmanship that he can maintain and even increase your interest in this unlovely crew. The story moves forward with an enveloping sense of revenge. The subjugation of the Greek household and the storing up of its minute hatreds are infuriating to see. It might have been pitiable, were there a person here worth caring for.

A Masque of Reason

By ROBERT FROST

+ + +



R. FROST

THE dramatic element has always been strong in Mr. Frost's lyrics, and it is not surprising that he should now produce a kind of ballet in verse, for that is in a sense an extension of his lyrical method. The surprise consists rather in the tone of *A Masque of Reason* and in its sources — in, that is, Frost's

choosing to write a sequel to or a satire on (as you wish to view it) the Book of Job, and to divorce himself from speculations and sentiments which hitherto have been attached quite explicitly to a locality and to the somewhat dogged pieties which comprise its picture of itself.

A Masque of Reason is presented as the forty-third chapter of Job. The ancient sufferer, still unsatisfied by God's answer of His inscrutability, demands to know the reason why. So does Job's wife, a theological feminist. God replies: —

... Job and I together
Found out the discipline man needed most
Was to learn his submission to unreason.

This, still, does not satisfy Job, and at last God confesses, with considerable anxiety: —

I was just showing off to the Devil, Job,
As is set forth in chapters One and Two.

Job replies: —

'Twas human of You. I expected more
Than I could understand and what I get
Is almost less than I can understand.

And in so far as *A Masque of Reason* is to be read for metaphysical intentions, this seems to be its essence.

It is clear, however, from the tone of bantering irreverence and from the accidents of situation and of language (puns, for example, and constant contemporary allusions) with which Mr. Frost supplements Biblical considerations, that he is at least as intent on writing an entertaining poem as he is on writing a philosophical one. That they need not be distinct, *A Masque of Reason* amply demonstrates, and no more clearly than at its end.

God calls in the Devil, finally,

More to give his reality its due
Than anything;

for he has lost stature of late (or apparent stature) through "Church neglect and figurative use." The Devil does not wish to speak, and does not, in fact, wish to remain. (Denis de Rougemont points out in a new book that the Devil's first trick is the escape into anonymity.) He steps on a "tendency,"

... like the Gulf Stream,
Only of sand not water,

and, without himself moving, begins to move away; but Job's wife, who is determined to take a picture of the three of them, pulls him off it and makes him stay. No humor could be more metaphysical.

Yet what is most memorable about *A Masque of Reason* is not so much its humor or its metaphysics as the tone of voice in which these characters speak at all times except the few occasions when topicality drowns them out: the tone of ancient wisdom, which carries with it the full weight and weariness of that skepticism to which intelligence is doomed. *Holt, \$2.00.*

MARK SCHORER

Tomorrow's Business

By BEARDSLEY RUMML

+ + +



B. RUMML

THE importance of this book rests not so much on its content as on its author. The advocates of a socially controlled democratic capitalism, dedicated to the abolition of unemployment and depressions, have gained a powerful ally. More important, he is from the most unlikely of places — business.

Perhaps this is unfair to Beardsley Rumml. There is no reason to suspect that his indifference to a balanced



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HARPER & BROTHERS

budget, his acceptance of government regulation, and his insistence on the government's economic role are of recent origin. Nor is businessman Ruml a newcomer to those other ideas which bring him under the "liberal" mantle. True, he has never stated those concepts so clearly before. Certainly the more orthodox compensatory spenders have not succeeded in presenting their philosophy with Ruml's suave good nature and urbane irresistibility.

Yet the book will not be manna to the New Dealers. The propriety of government action is not its central thesis; the propriety of business action is. As an apology for business, the book is as skillful and shrewd as any that has been written. But it will take more than Ruml's willingness to accept government spending to endear him to those whose affection for business is at best secondary. And Ruml's approach to business will not reduce the disaffection with it. When he says there should ordinarily be no limitations on profits, because "the greater the profit, the greater the service," the reply will be "Yes — in an atmosphere of perfect competition."

In part, Ruml's proposal to abolish corporate taxation flows from this premise. But in the absence of perfect, unlimited competition, some compulsion to distribute corporate income seems a necessary companion to tax elimination. Even Ruml's co-planner, H. Chr. Sonne, disagrees with Ruml here.

The ultimate debate on these very provocative pages will revolve around Ruml's acceptance of the philosophy of regulating the economy as a whole through fiscal controls and public works. He presents a convincing case for making the construction industry a quasi-public utility. That's dynamite. Once high-level production and employment are accepted as a social responsibility, there may be no logical halfway house short of government regulation of all the basic industries subject to cyclical fluctuations.

Tomorrow's Business has been recommended to businessmen. It deserves an unlimited audience. Even if you do not read this book, you will not be able to avoid the issues, ideas, and proposals so skillfully presented. *Farrar & Rinehart, \$2.50.*

LEO M. CHERNE

Great Son

By EDNA FERBER

+ + +



E. FERBER

TO EDNA FERBER goes the credit for falling in love with some fine American institutions: the vigor of our pioneers, the vitality of the West they built, the sense of obligation and the amazing maturity of our youngest — what Miss Ferber calls our "demi-siècle" — generation. As symbols she has chosen

Seattle and the amazing Melendy family, whose four generations span the city's history and indicate its future. That future has possibilities as vast as those which met

the immigrants of less than a hundred years ago; they landed penniless in a wilderness and became the lumber and shipping barons, the Klondike gold kings whose watch-chain nuggets to this day proclaim them sourdoughs.

It is the youngest Melendy, Mike, at home in the air as his grandfather was in the ships of Puget Sound or his father behind the wheel of a Stutz, who knows he must put back into his country what his family has been taking with both hands since 1851, who knows it is a spiritual debt which can be paid in the Burma jungles more easily than at home. Miss Ferber is a natural storyteller, and Americans are going to put her book well up on the best-seller lists in much the same spirit that they have placed the popular song "Don't Fence Me In" at the head of the hit parade. It seems to me that the charms of American imperialism lurk unaware in both. *Doubleday, Doran, \$2.50.*

DOROTHY HILLYER

The Headmistress

By ANGELA THIRKELL

+ + +

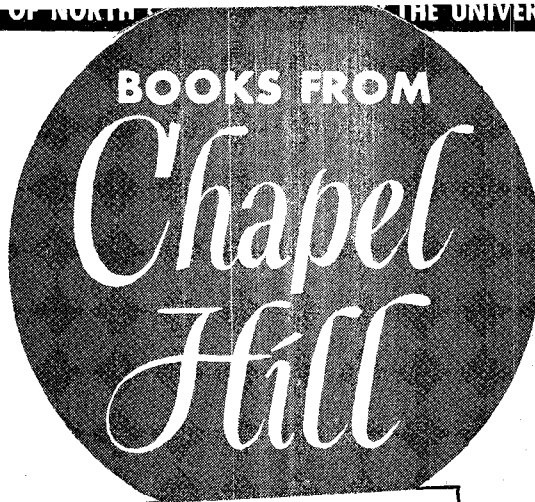


A. THIRKELL

I WONDER if Mass Observation has survived the war years in England. I hope so. The Mass Observers' idea has highly romantic charms and is no doubt entirely useless in the stern gaze of scientific historians. The theory, quite simply, is that only by considering one part at a time can you understand any whole. Individual Mass Observers all over England kept observing diaries, sent them into headquarters, where, duly assembled, the separate fragments made a complete mosaic of any given day. (I shudder to think of the filing problems.)

Several years ago I saw one Mass Observation book. As I remember it, the record covered the day of the Coronation. We had the observer in the remote country to whom the country man said, "Eee be a fine maan, yon Jarge," and the observer who overheard what the earl said to the duke in Westminster — eavesdropping made noble, literature without the pangs of composition. I had a wistful desire to join the club.

Angela Thirkell and *The Headmistress* have reminded me of Mass Observation. People who do not admire Miss Thirkell's books point with withering scorn to her unique absorption in one part of England, one sort of people, one set of ideas — and all snobbish ones at that. With the world what it is, they sneer, how can she! This, I think, is ungrateful. She can because she knows how, and brings the considerable force of her neat acid talent to bear on her particular observation point. It is no more objectionable for her to limit herself to Barsetshire than for another author to limit himself to the control compartment of a submarine. Each has its own reality. What is more, the production trend is toward more control compart-



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ments and fewer Barsetshires, as Miss Thirkell well knows.

This knowledge, perhaps, is what makes *The Headmistress* not quite so funny as some of the earlier books, and a good bit more wistful. The characters seem less considerable than the setting. The lovely land, the lovely houses, the frail and beautiful minutiae are nostalgically catalogued. Ladies in Utility dresses eat war emergency bread from Spode plates in seventeenth-century drawing rooms, and death in battle takes the young. But Miss Thirkell has the ear and eye for it. Unless she irritates you to Anglophobia, she amuses you in a way entirely her own.

The wartime format by Knopf is an especially nice one. But where was the proofreader? Especially on page 87. Knopf, \$2.50.

FRANCES WOODWARD

The Wise-Wrenn Correspondence

Edited by FANNIE E. RATCHFORD

+ + +

IT is unfortunate that Miss Fannie Ratchford, in her extensive prefatory remarks to *Letters of Thomas J. Wise to John Henry Wrenn: A Further Inquiry into the Guilt of Certain Nineteenth-century Forgers*, uses a rather ungenerous tone towards the two booksellers who a decade ago published their scholarly exposé of Wise's publishing activities. In 1934 John Carter and Graham Pollard published their *Enquiry into the Nature of Certain Nineteenth Century Pamphlets*. In it they proved, scientifically, that fifty-odd "first editions," many of which had been valued highly by collectors of rare books, were printed much later than the dates appearing on their title-pages.

The finger of suspicion pointed unmistakably to Thomas J. Wise, since deceased, as the fabricator of them. Wise, a London dealer in essential oils, was an eminent — perhaps the most eminent — English book collector of his time, and enjoyed a distinguished reputation as a bibliographer. Oxford University conferred on him the honorary degree of Master of Arts, and he was a member of the famous Roxburghe Club, the most exclusive collectors' club in the world.

The main points at issue — the complicity of Buxton Forman, Sir Edmund Gosse, and Herbert Gorfin — have been argued by Miss Ratchford in somewhat greater detail than they seem to deserve. In the opinion of Mr. Carter, Gosse in later years "realized there was something seriously wrong with" the Reading edition of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Sonnets*. He is, therefore, condemned by Carter as an accessory after the fact. His complicity in the actual production of the forgeries has not yet been proved — even by Miss Ratchford.

In the case of the shopboy-bookseller Gorfin, the distinction is even finer. He too is absolved from participa-

tion in the manufacture of the pamphlets — as Carter has pointed out, Gorfin's age alone made any such participation impossible. But that he, who at Wise's instance had concocted provenances for collections being offered to Wrenn, should have had no suspicion as to the origin of the pamphlets he was wholesaling for Wise — implies a naïveté which is hardly credible. Mr. Carter and Mr. Pollard, to be sure, had the advantage of having talked with Gorfin. They were convinced that Gorfin, though admitting that he had secured them in quantities from Wise, never knew the pamphlets to be spurious. There is nothing actionable in buying or selling "remainders." Is it likely that Gorfin would admit to knowledge of the true nature of the productions, when such an admission would lay him open to prosecution for fraud?

One aspect of the Wise-Wrenn letters — their artistry as examples of sales promotion — suggests an important possibility which Miss Ratchford appears to have overlooked (or ignored). Most of the purchases of legitimate books made by Wise on Wrenn's behalf were in "lots," or from unidentifiable sources. "As a rule I do not preserve receipts, they only accumulate and become a nuisance," Wise wrote to Wrenn (*Letters*, p. 447). And on very few occasions did he send his friend any evidence as to the real cost of the books he was continually supplying.

It seems more than probable that each transaction (with the exception of purchases at auction) carried a concealed profit for Wise the purveyor. Wrenn's son asserts that his father never paid Wise any commissions. Were any necessary? Wise was extremely methodical in his accounts. Does it not seem curious that he had such a dislike for invoices?

The letters themselves are, of course, the most interesting and important part of Miss Ratchford's book. One could wish that she had annotated them with a little more freedom. Of the copy of Keats's *Poems* inscribed to Severn, and the *Lamia* inscribed to Lamb, which Wise tells of having bought for himself, and which are described in the 1905 *Ashley Library Catalogue*, Miss Ratchford merely remarks that they do not appear in the 1922-1926 edition of the same catalogue. Actually they later became the property of Frank B. Bemis and are now in the Harvard College Library. On page 209 Wise refers to the octavo *Deserted Village* as "this tiny impostor," which in the opinion of this writer it certainly is. Miss Ratchford fails to note, however, that the 1922-1926 *Ashley Library Catalogue*, Wise having in the meantime acquired a copy, lists it as a *princeps*, describing two different issues.

On page 460 appears the following sentence: "I think we shall see this year out with a 6 per cent rate." Miss Ratchford can make neither head nor tail of this remark. May it, perhaps, not refer to the current rate of interest in banking circles?

These letters form an important addition to the literature of bibliography, and it is high time they were printed. It is too bad that they could not have been printed in their entirety, but it is to be supposed that their bulk made such a project commercially impossible. Knopf, \$7.50.

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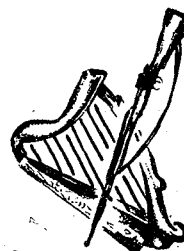
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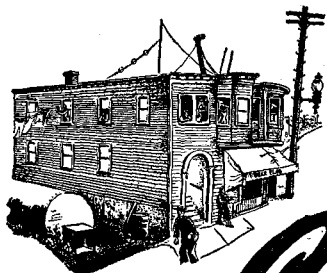
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GABRIEL GALLOWAY

by MARY LAVIN

SUMMARY. — This is the story of three generations of an Irish family. In the small, crumbling village of Castlerampart, the most prominent man is Theodore Coniffe, the village landlord. He is as penny-pinching as his wife Katherine is vain. Their two daughters, Theresa and Sara, grow up to be young ladies of property, if not of good looks. While they are still in their teens, Katherine dies in giving birth to her third daughter, Lily. The older girls assume the responsibility of Lily's upbringing and she becomes the timid Cinderella of the household.

The household is upset when a young lawyer appears in the village. Old Theodore sees in Cornelius Galloway a potential son-in-law. Cornelius divides his attention between Theresa and Sara, but on an enchanted evening it is to Lily, the sixteen-year-old, that he proposes. After their honeymoon, the newlyweds drive home in their new coach (bought at Theodore's expense), an extravagance which at first nettles and then tickles the old man. Cornelius is a spender. He buys a spirited mare and rides to hounds with the local gentry. He starts to build a new house outside town, but his career is cut short when in the fifth month of his marriage he is killed in the hunting field. Lily, the young widow, soon sinks back into a feeling of inferiority toward her older sisters, and even the birth of her son, Gabriel, does not restore her authority. When Theodore dies, it is found that little Gabriel, aged six, has inherited his fortune. But it is Theresa, with her iron severity, who rules the roost.

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THE places of the scholars in the classroom benches of the National Schools were not altogether indicative of their mental proficiency. There were other factors that had to be taken into consideration, and even these were variable and liable to alteration. On wet days, for example, all who came from a great distance were put sitting near the fire that they might dry out more rapidly; and on days when an inspector was due, the clever boys were dispersed here and there through the room, much as gold threads are sewn into a coarse fabric, which is thus given a false appearance of costliness.

On normal days, however, the setting out of the benches was determined by a very simple factor. It had originally been the custom for each scholar to bring with him each day a sod of turf for the school fire. This habit had persisted into Gabriel Galloway's time with one important alteration: those who could not easily procure turf were allowed to bring instead a halfpenny piece. Since turf was not so easily procurable in the town, by tacit agreement the town boys brought halfpennies and the country boys brought turf; and the original reason for the distinction having long been forgotten, the town children, handing up their copper piece, had a plutocratic dignity in comparison with the country children who took from

under their coats a large flaky sod of turf and, holding it up for the teacher to see, threw it into the reed basket by the chimney place.

Those who brought turf sat on one side of the aisle, and those who brought copper sat on the other side. This difference was further accentuated by the fact that the town boys wore ready-made suits of varying dyes while the country children wore rough tweed suits made oftentimes by their mothers, and sometimes from the same length of tweed, since it was procured from a peddler's barrow that went from cottage to cottage.

The rough tweeds sat on the left side of the monitor; the serge suits sat upon his right. Gabriel sat in the front row of serge suits and Larry Soraghan at the foot end of the rough tweeds. Larry on the first day had cast many glances at Gabriel, and when the time came for the boys to take a run in the yard he went up to Gabriel and raised his voice loud enough to be heard by all the others.

"Will you come out this evening after school?" he said.

"Where?" said Gabriel.

"Anywhere," said Larry. "We could go down to the river."

"I'll ask if I can go," said Gabriel doubtfully.

Larry lowered his voice, "I'll be waiting for you under the arch of the bridge," he said.

"But the water goes under the arch!" said Gabriel.

"I know a way of getting down over the top of the bridge so you can creep onto a ledge under the arch without getting wet. No one else knows about it. It's my secret place. I keep a lot of things there in a crack in the wall. But I'll let you into the secret. And I'll show you how to get down. You climb onto the top of the bridge

A daughter of Irish parents, MARY LAVIN spent ten years of her childhood in Walpole, Massachusetts, before returning to Eire. The author of short stories, whose talent has been signalized by the James Tait Black Memorial Prize, she has been working steadily for the past three years on this, her first long novel, of which the *Atlantic* is proud to publish related episodes. Now in her early thirties, Mary makes her home in Dublin, where she divides her time between her husband, — an Irish solicitor, — their year-old daughter, and her manuscripts.

and sit on it for a while until you're sure there's no one looking; then you turn round and let your legs hang over the water. You have to hang by your hands, but after a bit you feel your feet resting on the ledge under the bridge. Don't let go then, whatever you do, or you'll fall back into the water."

"What will I do?" said Gabriel, as breathlessly as if he were indeed hanging by his hands above the racing river, with his feet slipping and missing their foothold over an unseen ledge.

"You feel with your hand till you find an iron ring that's sticking out of the stone, and you catch that at the same time as you let go your other hand. Then you slide onto the ledge," said Larry, "like this!" And swooping his right hand down through the air he slid it to rest, knuckles under, in the palm of the other hand. "I'll be there," he said, finishing the instructions, "but don't shout out. Take three stones and throw them into the water, plop, plop, plop. And I will take three bits of cement off the wall and throw them in after your plop, plop, plop. That's the secret signal to show the den is safe."

"Safe from what?" said Gabriel, and again he spoke as if the fears were imminent, and as if he would indeed be permitted to keep this rendezvous, a fact that he had good cause to doubt. As the day advanced, his doubts grew, and when Mary Ellen called for him at the school gate and led him home at a swift pace while the other scholars dawdled along, chalking faces on the pavement and sailing boats in the rivulets of the gutter, he felt that he would not even have the courage to ask permission, much less expect it to be granted him.

When, however, he had been kissed by his mother, pressed to his aunt Sara's heart, and called up before his aunt Theresa to tell her all about the day, he felt a return of courage.

"Can I go out after dinner, Aunt Theresa?" he said.

Theresa was startled. Gabriel could see this and he could even feel that his mother and his aunt Sara were startled, although they were behind him, with their backs to the light. He felt a rustling of skirts as they agitated their hands and exchanged glances.

"Where do you want to go, Gabriel?" said Theresa.

"A boy in school asked me to play with him," said Gabriel.

Aunt Sara advanced. "Isn't it nice that he made friends so soon," she said.

"Who is this boy?" said Theresa and his mother, both speaking at the same time. "Are you going to his house to play, or is he coming here to play with you?"

"He told me to meet him down at the river," said Gabriel.

Theresa stiffened. "Who was this boy?" she said, in quite a different tone.

"Larry Soraghan," said Gabriel.

"Larry Soraghan!" The three sisters repeated the words, but at slightly different moments and with slightly different speeds, so that all Gabriel heard was a vague sound that filled the air for a moment and left an aghast silence.

"This is what comes of having to send him to the

National School," said his mother at last. "The Soraghans are good children, biddable and clean, and they are good workers, but they're no company for Gabriel."

"I thought there was some distinction made," said Sara timidly.

"There can be no distinction in the National School," said Theresa, "although I understood they tried to keep the rough element apart."

Gabriel understood very little of this. He gathered, however, that he was hardly likely to be allowed down to the river; and since he was not to go, the dangers and hazards of reaching the ledge were lessened and he felt that he was being deprived of a wonderful adventure.

"Why can't I go?" he said, pouting his lips.

The sisters stared at him. Lily opened her mouth to give an explanation and closed it again. Theresa stood up.

"Gabriel, your mother and your aunts do not wish you to play with the Soraghan children. They are good children, but they are not fit companions for you. You will some day own this house and several other houses, and Larry Soraghan will some day have to take up a common position like —" (she tried to think what demeaning future was likely for Larry Soraghan) "like a railway porter!" she finished.

Gabriel had not acquired the habit of disobedience. He accepted without questioning the discipline laid upon him, and although the fact that Larry Soraghan was destined to be a railway porter when he grew up added, instead of subtracted, from the glory that hung around this hero who made secret lairs in the dark arches of a bridge, Gabriel abandoned all hope of going out and resolved not to become engaged in any more speculative plans.

"But he must have someone to play with," said Lily. "It's the only way to safeguard him against playing with the wrong kind of children."

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"I KNEW somebody would turn up," Sara said, a few days later, when she came in to report a piece of news that Mrs. Molloy had reported to her.

"What are you talking about?" said Theresa.

"I knew a suitable companion would be found for Gabriel. I was talking to Mrs. Molloy and she told me that she is expecting a charming lady to stay with her as a permanent guest, and that this lady has a young boy only two years older than Gabriel. I'm sure he'll be exactly the right companion for Gabriel. His father was an artist and he died seven years ago. His mother is a perfect lady and she wants above all to give her son Sylvester a chance to fulfill his father's promise. He's away at boarding school now," she hastened to add. "But he'll be home at mid-term. We might invite him in to tea with Gabriel?"

The middle of the winter term came around at last and one afternoon as Gabriel sat in the back drawing room with pencils and crayons, filling in the o's in his school-books, the door was opened and his aunt Sara came running into the room.

"Oh, Gabriel, are your hands clean? Your aunt Theresa and your mother have gone to call on the new visitor at the Central Hotel, and if her son Sylvester is home from school they are going to send him in to visit you. Now you'll have someone to play with you! Are your hands clean?" And taking out her cambric handkerchief Aunt Sara hastily moistened it with her lips; and lifting up his hands one after the other she wiped certain areas where the pencil might possibly have left a slight trace of lead.

While this operation was in progress a darkness came over the room, and looking up Gabriel saw a pale face pasted for a second to the outer side of the glass. A moment later there was a loud rat-a-tat on the hall door.

"It's all right to knock loud when you're invited," said his aunt Sara, as if justifying some unspoken criticism; and dusting her own fingers with the moist handkerchief before secreting it under the lace jabot of her bodice, she went out quickly to open the door, without waiting for Mary Ellen.

"This is Sylvester," she said when she came back a second later, followed by a thin boy about Gabriel's own height. He had a pale face and straight, fair hair, thin and glossy like pale embroidery floss, and his eyes were a curious yellow color. "I'll leave you alone," said Sara, and she nodded brightly at Gabriel. Her hand was shaking so much with excitement that twice it slipped off the glossy white knob of the door before she opened it and went out.

The two boys remained standing for a time. Gabriel felt a great shyness, but while Sylvester moved around the room taking up one object after another and examining it in silence, he recovered his balance if not his speech; and going around in Sylvester's wake he picked up his own particularly admired curios and thrust them into the older boy's hand.

There was a large white shell, speckled all over with brown dots, and having a saw-edge to its great pink lip. Gabriel liked it, and when Sylvester put down the ivory elephant with jade tusks, he thrust the speckled shell into his hand.

Sylvester looked at it and then he clicked the fingers of his left hand.

"I have it!" he said, aloud. "A dove — one of those pale doves with small heads darting from side to side."

Gabriel looked in amazement at the shell in Sylvester's hand. He failed to see any resemblance. Sylvester saw his amazement and he laughed.

"I don't mean that this is like a dove," he said, tossing it up into the air and just succeeding in catching it again as it came down. "I mean your aunt Sara. Don't you think she's like a dove?"

"I don't know," said Gabriel.

"You're probably not observant," said Sylvester, and he picked up the crayon drawing with which Gabriel had been passing the time. Gabriel flushed.

"I never saw red smoke," said Sylvester, looking at it.

"I had no black," said Gabriel defensively.

"Smoke is blue," said Sylvester.

Gabriel looked at the chimney where the dark mounts

of slack were pierced in places with a dull smoke. He pointed his finger at the grate.

"But when it comes out at the top of the chimney it's blue," said Sylvester, and he went to the window followed by Gabriel. Far off, from one or two chimneys frail streamers of smoke rose up straight like blue quill feathers that had a jaunty twist to the tips.

"Let's go out," said Sylvester.

Gabriel looked at him, and his heart beat fast.

"I'll ask my aunt Sara," he said, "but I doubt if she will give me permission without getting the permission of my mother and my aunt Theresa."

Up to this, Sylvester had treated Gabriel with as scant an interest as that he had bestowed upon the speckled shell and the ivory elephant, but now he stared at him with genuine interest.

"Do you have to ask permission if you want to go out?" he said.

"My aunts don't like me to mix with people," said Gabriel. "That's why they asked you to come in and play with me."

"Play with you! What do they think I am — a nurse-maid? I'm going out," he said, and then in the doorway he looked back at the pale and serious child whose face shone white in the dark room as human faces stand out in dark faded oil paintings. "Come on out. I'll leave you home again and if there's a row I'll take the blame."

Gabriel stared at him.

"Come on," said Sylvester. "I'm not going to wait here all day!"

Gabriel followed Sylvester into the dark hall, and without glancing backwards went out through the bright doorway into the street. He had only one moment of compunction as he thought of his aunt Sara, who was probably at that very moment spreading butter on neat slices of bread, shaking the ironed creases out of the stiff white linen tablecloth, and looking at herself in the silver teapot to make sure its polish was the very brightest polish possible.

"Did you never go out by yourself before?" said Sylvester, as they went slowly up the street.

"No!" said Gabriel.

"Didn't you ever want to go?"

Gabriel said nothing. He had so seldom contemplated going out that he had no views upon being forbidden to do so. Sylvester seemed to be waiting for an answer. Gabriel remembered the first day he went to school.

"I wanted to go out one day when Larry Soraghan asked me to meet him at the river," he said, "but I wouldn't be let go."

"Why?"

"My aunts didn't want me to play with Larry Soraghan."

"Why?"

"They don't like him," said Gabriel sedately.

"Do you like him?" said Sylvester.

"I don't know. You see, I haven't spoken to him since then."

Sylvester walked on a few steps. "I never take another person's opinion of anything. I find out for myself. If I

were you, I'd find out for myself about Larry Soraghan. If I didn't like him, I'd agree with my aunts to save trouble; but if I did like him, I'd face up to them and tell them so."

Gabriel's admiration made him sigh. He put his hands into his pockets in the way that Sylvester had his hands in his pockets, and when Sylvester took them out a moment later and began to bite his nails, Gabriel tried to bite his nails but they had been so smoothly and finely rounded by his aunt Sara's emery board that he could not get a grip upon them with his teeth and he had to forgo this detail in the emulation of his hero.

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WHEN the mid-term holiday ended and Sylvester went back to the boarding school, two abiding changes had been made in Gabriel's life: it was an accepted fact that he could go out to play after school as long as he did not leave Clewe Street; and although he was not allowed to play with him elsewhere, he was allowed to play with Larry Soraghan in the school yard. But for real companionship Gabriel began to depend upon the holidays that brought Sylvester back to Castlerampart.

One day during the long summer holidays, when Gabriel woke up, Sylvester was sitting on the wall that divided the Central Hotel from the Coniffe garden, swinging his legs and whistling for him to come out in the sun. Underneath the wall the spotted dog barked with impatience to be away. Gabriel sprang out of bed and began to put on his trousers. Just as he did so, however, Mary Ellen came into his room.

"Why are you putting on your old clothes?" she asked. "Don't you know that today is a Holy Day? You have to go to church." And she went to the cupboard and began to take out his best suit.

Gabriel did not know that it was a Holy Day. A feeling of bitter resentment rose up within him, and he dropped his old clothes to the floor. He felt that he had been imposed upon. It was not a Sunday. He was reconciled to the Sundays. They never took him unawares and interfered with his plans. But this Holy Day was a different matter. However, there was no way out of it. To church he must go. He picked up his serge suit and began to get into it.

But as he dressed, his mind was filled with dismal thoughts. He pictured to himself the interior of the church, with its plain whitewashed walls and its moldering wooden pews. The windows were so high that you could see nothing through them, and although there was a stained-glass window near the altar it was darkened by the high trees outside, and he could never fully follow the story of its colored fragments. Moreover, this stained-glass window, which was intended to throw a colored light inward on the chapel interior, only impeded the ordinary light, and gave the chapel a strange day-darkness such as would be experienced elsewhere only in times of heavy fog.

Gabriel grew more and more dismal. Then he remembered Sylvester. Perhaps Sylvester was going to church

too. And at the thought of having his company up the street, and sitting in the same pew with him, he brightened somewhat. But when Gabriel was ready he found that Sylvester had already been to the early service.

"I'll be up the street with you, though," Sylvester conceded, and so they set off.

Gabriel walked along reluctantly, half hoping that he would be late for some of the ceremony, and half fearful that the hurrying people who shared the pathway with him might read this intention in his mind and tell his aunts or his mother about him. How shocked they would be to think that he dallied deliberately on the way to church!

Then another thought struck him. If his mother and his aunts would be so vexed with him, how would God regard him? Would God be terribly angry?

A further thought struck him. What would happen if he didn't go to church at all? Would God care? What would He do?

He tried to imagine how God would act, but he could only imagine God as a vague person, sitting on a great throne, miles and miles away up in the clouds, His arms folded together under a vast white robe and His eyes always shut in magnificent unconcern.

For a moment Gabriel faltered. Then he put his hand in his pocket and drew out his penny for the plate. "Let's buy oranges," he said, "and climb into the Friary to eat them!" Sylvester stretched out his hand. "Give me your penny," he said. "I'll get the oranges. You wait here."

When he returned a few minutes later he was holding up two golden globes that shone in the morning sunlight with a bright, illicit glow. And the next thing, with an orange apiece, they were racing through the field behind the church, startling the priest's cow, and climbing over the Friary wall to jump down intrepidly into the nettles within the ruin.

The Friary enclosure was no longer open for burials. Those who had been laid there might no longer lie in the expectation of new fellows to keep them company. And it was a long time since those who lay there had last seen the light of day. The most vivid imagination could picture nothing beneath the serried headstones but a vast network of bleached bones. Meanwhile all was orderly and rigid, and no tombstone tottered, however sunk the clay under it, for the graves here were so closely packed that they supported one another.

Within the abbey ruins itself, still more massive memorials reared up into the blue air that came down through the roofless arches. The original flagstones of the Friary still remained in places, inscribed with strange archaic letters that baffled the learning of the two lower-bench scholars as they wandered about, their footsteps echoing from the flags and their voices, which they hardly dared raise above a whisper, whispered back from the ghostly gray stones.

As they wandered around reading the lettering on the ancient monuments as if they were reading lessons upon a slate, they began to wonder whether the ceremony in the church was over or only just begun. When they looked back at the green field beyond the wall, it seemed but a

moment since they had fled across it; when they peered into the dim recesses of the ruin, it seemed that they had been straying there for hours.

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SYLVESTER was the first to climb up on the Friary wall. He sat astraddle on it and stretched out his hand to Gabriel, who was getting a foothold at the side of the wall.

"I can get up by myself," said Gabriel, anxious to show some capacity.

"Are you sure?" said Sylvester, as he turned to slip down on the other side to make way for Gabriel. Just as he turned around, however, and was about to find a foothold on the other side of the wall, he saw something in the distance that caused him to loosen his hands at once and drop to the ground at the other side.

The rattle of loose pebbles that fell with him, and a brief startled exclamation that he gave, were all the warning Gabriel got, but even if he had had a more distinct warning he could not have done anything because he was at that moment hoisting himself to the top and could see or do nothing until he himself was astraddle the wall. From there, however, he lost no time in looking around him.

Coming across the churchyard was his aunt Theresa, making not for the church, but straight for the stile in the wall! She had seen them. Gabriel saw to his horror that his aunt was traveling at such a speed she did not bother even to lift the hem of her dress above the level of the wet blades.

When Theresa got to the foot of the wall she said nothing for a moment, but fixed her eye upon her nephew, who sat speechless atop it. Then she opened her mouth. "I always knew there was a bad streak in you!" she said. She knew all.

Gabriel dropped to the ground, the balls of his feet tingling from the contact with the earth at such force. For a minute he thought that Theresa was going to strike him as she raised her umbrella, but instead of striking him she prodded him in the back with the point of it. When she gave him another and more violent prod it occurred to him that by this method she was urging him into motion. On the other side of the wall he heard a slight stir, and guessed that Sylvester was creeping away. He began to walk across the grass slowly, prodded moment by moment in the small of the back when he showed any reluctance to continue. And several times, indeed, he felt a great reluctance to continue, because one or two people now lingered at the entrance to the chapel in order to see what the unusual scene might mean. They would soon know.

"It's a bad thing when a boy has to be driven to church with the point of a stick," said Theresa when she got to the door of the porch.

Gabriel was overcome with shame. He dared not lift his eyes; and as he made his way through the people around the church door, and went into the porch, he had only one thought and that was to hide himself soon in the crowded pews. But he was not to escape yet.

"Since when did you develop this contempt for the

holy-water font?" said his aunt, dragging him back by the sleeve; and not waiting for him to dip his fingers into the font, she dipped in her own fingers and sprinkled him with a cold dash of the water. A tendril of the green growth at the bottom came away on her finger and was dashed on his face, from which he dared not remove it.

The people near the door had turned around to stare at the sound of his aunt's audible whisper. As they looked at him Gabriel felt his cheeks burn. He looked at his aunt and made a gesture as if he would kneel down in a pew near the door.

"Go down to the front," she ordered.

And then, while his cheeks burned, she gave him another push forward, this time with her hand, and when he came to the second seat from the front she put her hand on his shoulder, pressing him to his knee so heavily that he nearly fell.

"Genuflect!" she said, and standing aside she ordered him into the pew.

From then to the end of the service, every time that he moved a fraction of an inch, his aunt shot a glance at him, until it seemed that every eye was upon him. It seemed that every tongue in the church would be busied with talk about him, as soon as the people rose from their knees and made their way out into the street. His mother and his aunt Sara would hear about him. The teachers in the school would hear about him. The Finnertys and the Molloyes would look at him queerly. Larry Soraghan would jeer at him.

When the service was over, as he filed out of the church with the congregation, Gabriel saw Sylvester standing with an innocent face by the wall. Sylvester made a sign to him and shrugged his shoulders. Gabriel understood. He had slipped away to put God to the test and Gabriel knew, without being told, that God had not sent him a sign. It had been silly to think that He might. The Deity, with His thunder and His power to walk on the clouds, seemed remote and fantastic beside the fear he now felt at the scene that his aunt would make as soon as they reached Clewe Street and were once inside the door.

When they reached the end of Clewe Street, however, and went into the narrow hallway, instead of turning upon him as he had expected, Theresa Coniffe made her way upstairs just as it was her custom to do upon ordinary Sundays and ordinary Holy Days, when she made it a point of carefully removing the clothes she had worn to church, and replaced in the side pieces of her hair the two metal curling pins which upon the lesser days of the week would not have been removed until the more seemly hour of supper.

Gabriel stared after her, uncertain as to what he should do under these peculiar circumstances. If only he could ask his mother or his aunt Sara. But worse than he dreaded his aunt Theresa's tongue, he dreaded to see the hurt expression that would come over their faces when they heard of his iniquity. The longer they were without knowing of it the better. Then, as he stood uncertain and perplexed on the mat at the foot of the stairs, he raised his head in surprise.

At that moment there was a sound overhead, and Gabriel heard the door of Theresa's room open and shut again with a rapidity which would have left one in doubts that a human being could have emerged through it in such short time if, a moment later, Theresa Coniffe had not appeared at the head of the stairs looking thinner than ever, for it was her practice, when she was in haste, to pin her skirts tight to her sides, to suppress all bows and side curls, and to walk with her hands folded in front of her, thus anticipating the theories which in a later day were worked out in the construction of battleships and destroyers: the elimination of as many as possible of the surfaces which might otherwise have caught the wind and impeded the speed of her progress. Thus equipped for speed, Theresa advanced. Gabriel gritted his teeth and kept his stance, right in the middle of the mat at the foot of the stairs. Come what might, he would not flinch.

Step by step Theresa came down. And then on the last step she stopped and looked at him.

"Are you out of your wits?" she demanded. "Or what are you standing there for? How can a person pass up or down?"

And leaving him to gape after her, Theresa brushed him to one side with a sweep of her arm and advanced into the kitchen. For a minute he was baffled. Then he seemed to see clearly again. Why, of course! She was going to tell her sisters about him first. Well, he reflected bitterly, they knew already. But just as he thought this the kitchen door opened and his aunt Sara came out, the two sisters brushing past each other with the indifference of any ordinary day in the year.

And as she passed him, the sinner, his aunt Sara bestowed on him one of her usual sweet smiles. She didn't know after all! But would his aunt Theresa let it go untold? Ah! he thought not. "Wait a minute, Sara," said Theresa calling her back, while at the same moment she leaned forward and looked into the kitchen. "Are you there, Lily? Come here a moment, please!" Gabriel gritted his teeth once more. But when Theresa opened her mouth again the words of purely domestic import that issued from it were so incalculable as to be almost incomprehensible.

"Sara! Lily! On no account must we forget the parsley for the soup today. It was most insipid yesterday without it." She swung around. "Gabriel, go down the garden and get a handful of parsley this minute. No, wait. Go up and change into your old shoes first, and then get it. You won't keep us waiting then after dinner."

Wasn't that his aunt Sara's voice that he heard in the kitchen? What was she doing there? Sara was rarely or never to be found at the heart of domestic activity. He listened intently. Wasn't that his mother's voice? His mother was in there too! They were all there! That was very strange. His aunt Sara usually made the beds at this hour. And his mother usually sorted the linen at the press on the attic landing.

Instantly he jumped to the conclusion that their presence in the kitchen had something to do with him. Could it be that they already knew of his escapade? Could it be that some rumor of it had already reached Clewe Street,

carried there even before he and his aunt Theresa had arrived?

Mrs. Molloy? Suspicion of Mrs. Molloy shot through him and left him quivering.

Mrs. Molloy, as Gabriel knew, frequently had to leave the church before the end of the service because of a complaint from which she suffered at times — a complaint which was known to Gabriel by the familiar name of Pins and Needles, and of which every symptom and manifestation had been laid bare to him by Mary Ellen, the confidante of Mrs. Molloy and herself an occasional sufferer from the same dreadful scourge.

Perhaps Mrs. Molloy had had Pins and Needles that morning! Gabriel shuddered. For, if Mrs. Molloy had had Pins and Needles it was beyond all doubt that she would have left the church earlier than the rest of the congregation; and if so, it was still further beyond all doubt that she would have put her head inside the Coniffe door as she passed, if only to say that she could tell the inmates something of interest to them were it not for the fact that she made it a practice never to be the bearer of bad news.

Yes, Gabriel felt sure that the news of his guilt had traveled before him. He could picture how his aunt Sara and his mother, having flown to Mary Ellen for comfort after hearing the allegations of Mrs. Molloy, would only await Theresa's confirmation of the incident before they gave way to the violence of their distress.

But when his aunt made no reference, before the sun went down under the rampart rim, to the incident in the Friary, he believed with absolute finality that all was to be forgotten and forgiven forever.

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BUT Theresa Coniffe's decision to let her nephew go unpunished was drawn from a deeper well than forgiveness or forgetfulness. She had never forgotten that Gabriel was the son of the man who had slighted her to marry her younger sister. But as a matter of fact she had rarely been able to vent her resentment on the child, because a *more biddable and obedient child than Gabriel Galloway* could hardly have been found. He not only did all that he was told to do, but as often as not he did not wait to be told. True, he was completely under her thumb, but it was a small triumph to have under your thumb a creature who submitted to you no more than he would have submitted to one of half your stature.

It was small satisfaction for Theresa to know that Gabriel would instantly fetch his muffler if she ordered him to do so, when she knew that he would fetch his galoshes just as quickly if his aunt Sara as much as mentioned that it was wet underfoot. When, therefore, she had come upon him in the Friary ruin, and realized that he was absenting himself from church, Theresa had experienced a curious sense of satisfaction. Here was an opportunity to humiliate Lily and to make more painful in the minds of all in Clewe Street the memory of Cornelius Galloway.

It was with this purpose of humiliating Lily that she

had driven Gabriel across the churchyard and ordered him down the aisle in front of her; and her mind, for the first few minutes after they knelt down, was a turmoil of sayings and proverbs that pressed themselves forward as being one more appropriate than another for utterance as she opened the door in Clewe Street and led the boy in to his mother with the story of his wickedness.

"Breed will show sooner or later."

"Like father, like son."

"You cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear."

She would fling the words out at Lily and Sara, leaving her meaning ambiguous until they were thoroughly ill at ease and then she would taunt them with the conduct of their pet.

Here in this very church she had suffered the humiliation of attending Lily's wedding; the elderly bridesmaid of a foolish young bride. Well, she was having some satisfaction now. Out of the corner of her eye she threw a glance at Gabriel.

Theresa drew a short, quick breath. This was no attitude to adopt in the house of God. What would people think of him? A new aspect of the affair occurred to her. She looked around her nervously. Perhaps this incident was but the first of a long series of iniquities by which this child would disgrace and abash his family?

She glanced over her shoulder again. Were people looking in their direction? She began to regret that she had made such a display of the boy. What were people thinking, she wondered. Were they laughing up their sleeves? She shot glances to right and left, looking obliquely out from under partially lowered lids.

The congregation was on its knees, engrossed in the service, but as Theresa glanced around the church her eye fell on the gaudy silken banners of the Women's Sodality, still hanging on their brass poles at the end of the pews from which old Luke had not had time to remove them since the Sodality meeting of the previous evening. At sight of the bright banners of the Sodality over which she presided as leader, and over the members of which she always exercised such a rigid and tireless example, Theresa's thoughts took another turn. Had the boy been altogether to blame? Had she herself been entirely blameless in the matter? After all, was he not under her care? Was she not responsible for his guidance; for what use in that respect was his poor bird of a mother?

Theresa's heart grew tight inside her Sunday bombazine, and she fixed her eyes once more on Gabriel. Instantly the fact that he was the son of Cornelius Galloway became insignificant beside the fact that he was also the grandson of Theodore Coniffe.

When the service came to an end, Theresa had therefore suffered a complete change of heart. From being the child's accuser she intended henceforth to be his guardian. But since the first move she made in the new direction was to give him another poke in the back and tell him to get out in the aisle, it was not to be wondered at that Gabriel was for a long time unaware of what had happened. Moreover, even if he had been aware of all that had gone on in his aunt's mind, it would have been a matter of small concern to him that his aunt Theresa had

constituted herself the guardian of his soul. Accustomed to have her examine the soles of his feet after he came in out of the rain in order to see if he had worn his galoshes, it was not much different to have her come into his room at night and take his trousers from the chair beside the bed to see if there was dust on the kneecaps to indicate that he had said his prayers. Accustomed to have her eye upon him at table to make sure that he chewed his food, it was hardly noticeable to him that she began to watch him also during the grace before meals in order to make sure that his lips were moving.

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ONCE in a while, however, as the months went by, he got brief shafts of vision upon his new position in the house. For instance one day when Sylvester was home on holidays, and when Gabriel himself was in bed with a chill, Sylvester had come up to his bedroom to see him.

Sitting up in bed, surrounded by books that his mother had bought for him, and complacently surveying the tea tray laden with iced cakes which his aunt Sara had prepared in order that the two boys could have a treat, Gabriel felt, for once, that he was in a superior position to his friend. Remembering that Sylvester and his mother had only exchanged their rooms in the Central Hotel for a small house under the arch of the railway bridge, he looked around with satisfaction at the rich red-papered walls of his room, at the glowing mahogany chests devoted exclusively to his small linens, and at the shelf over the mantelpiece which was burdened only with his own possessions, or such family ornaments as were promoted to that position by his own selection.

Among the latter objects there were two which had been but recently acquired, and upon them Gabriel's eyes rested proudly. Sylvester would surely be impressed by them; he had given a certain amount of attention to them when they were still down in the parlor upon the first day of all that he had visited the house. These objects were the ivory elephant with the jade tusks, and the large white shell with the saw-edged lip that was speckled all over with brown dots.

This afternoon, overcome by his pride in them, although he was strictly forbidden to put his foot outside the bed, Gabriel was on the point of dashing over to the mantelpiece for one moment to alter the position of these precious ornaments, and make sure that they would not fail to catch the eye of his visitor immediately upon his entry into the room, when there was a sound of footsteps on the stairs and Sylvester's voice outside the door.

A moment later the door opened and Sylvester was in the room.

When Gabriel had lain complacently surveying his surroundings he had hoped that Sylvester would notice them. He had not dared to hope that his friend would examine the room corner for corner, which as a matter of fact Sylvester proceeded to do the moment the door had closed behind him.

"So this is your room?" said Sylvester, whose prelim-

inary greeting to the invalid had taken the form of a nod. "Do you sleep here all alone?"

Without waiting for an answer, Sylvester ran his eyes over the furniture, resting particularly on the chest of drawers.

"Can you use all the drawers," he asked, "or are some of them locked?"

Simultaneously with the question he had asked, however, he had obviated the necessity for a reply by pulling out all the drawers one after another and revealing for himself Gabriel's ownership of the garments folded and piled therein.

At the ornaments on the mantelpiece Sylvester gazed not at all. And his eye when it fell on the rich red wallpaper seemed to darken as if with a frown.

"Don't you like the wallpaper?" said Gabriel, sitting up higher in the bed. "Don't you think this is a nice room?"

But the mere fact that he was forced to ask the question, and to cast it into a negative form, showed that already some of his complacency had begun to flag.

Sylvester gave up his survey.

"Oh, it's all right," he said. "It's a good thing to have privacy." He nodded over his shoulder at the chest against the wall. "That's a good chest you've got there," he said. "Good, deep drawers; they'd be better, of course, if they had locks and keys to them, but that's a small job."

Gabriel allowed himself to slump down more comfortably into the pillows.

"Won't you sit down?" he said, with some remnant of the magnanimity with which he had intended to entertain his guest. He indicated a green wicker chair that Sara had placed beside his bed and on which she had put a fat cushion of red plush embroidered with yellow roses.

Sylvester was not ready to sit down. He had not yet completed his survey of the room.

"On the whole, it's not a bad room," he said; and then, just as he was preparing to sit down, an expression of great distaste came over his face.

What was the matter? Gabriel sat up again.

Sylvester's eye, at the moment when he shuddered, had been fixed on a picture that hung over the mantelpiece, and although he had hurriedly glanced away from it, it was to this picture that Gabriel's own eyes now flew in search of some reason why Sylvester should have behaved as he did. But the picture that had hung in that position as long as he could remember was so familiar to him that his eyes passed over it now with uncritical tolerance. It was a cheap print of a religious subject, executed in gaudy, facile colors, and differed only from those sold on a huckster's barrow by reason of the ornate and expensive frame in which it was confined.

Gabriel looked back questioningly at Sylvester.

"Why don't you take that down?" said Sylvester. "How can you stand it in the room?" And he nodded his left ear at the print, unwilling to submit his eyes to the strain of seeing it again.

Take down the picture! It would have appeared as easy to Gabriel to take down the wall upon which it hung. Immediately the feeling of proprietorship which had filled

him with such pride a moment before vanished and left him with the feeling that he was but a miserable tenant in the room with the red wallpaper.

"Will you have some tea?" he asked quickly and valiantly, to keep his spirits from drooping. "We have only to press the bell and Mary Ellen will bring the teapot."

But the iced cakes, and even the gingerbread men that Mary Ellen brought up, hot from the oven, had lost their taste, and he could not stop his eye from wandering back to the picture, and his mind from dwelling upon Sylvester's criticism of it.

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THE day after Sylvester's visit Gabriel was well enough to get up and leave his room, and so the picture was not continually under his eye to annoy him, but every night and morning it was there to confront him when he went in with his candle or when he opened his eyes at daylight.

For three or four days Gabriel bore his irritation about the picture, but on the night of the fourth day, after he had blown out the candle and lain in the darkness for a while, it suddenly became insufferable to him to think that, although he could not see it, the picture hung upon the wall directly in front of him, outfacing him, you might say, even in the darkness.

All at once a spirit of daring and adventure came over him and made him tremble with excitement. He would do something about it. He would! With a shaking hand he groped for the matches and lit the candle. "I'll turn it with its face to the wall," he said. He jumped out of bed; and catching hold of the old wicker chair on which he laid his clothes at night, he dragged it over to the fireplace and sprang up on the seat of it, regardless of the creaking osiers. Then he caught the frame of the picture.

It seemed but a matter of moments now to turn it around from back to front. But before his hands had rightly grasped the frame, Gabriel became aware that something was wrong.

For a moment he thought that the chair had slipped from under his feet. In the next he thought that the picture had fallen from its cord, and at the next, with greater horror, he thought that the whole side of the wall was crashing down before him. For, no sooner had he put his hands upon the picture than, from under it, there began to scatter to all sides such a shower of leaflets, medallions, old letters, envelopes, and sprigs of faded palm that it would be hard for the steadiest head to be sure of what in that room was stationary and what was in agitation.

At last the shower subsided, and Gabriel looked down at the jackdaw's collection that lay on the floor below him. Without another thought he stepped down and began to pick up the objects, stowing them away in fistfuls in their original place behind the picture. For what use was there now in thinking to move it? Every time he touched it this shower would be whirled to the floor. Every time? Yes. For need it be said that, although he intended to turn the picture to the wall, he intended to

restore it to its original position in the morning. Perhaps it was all for the best, thought Gabriel, as he stowed the last handful of leaflets behind the picture, got down from the wicker chair, and climbed in between the cold sheets with a feeling of defeat. For what would happen if, one morning, he should forget to turn the picture right side out again?

It was all very well for Sylvester to talk. He probably felt that he had to say what he said, because his father was an artist, but this house wasn't the only one with holy pictures on the walls. Larry Soraghan said their house was filled with them.

"Ma says they bring a blessing on the house," said Larry, "and at the same time they help to hide the spots of damp on the wall."

Somehow or other Larry's remark made him feel better about the picture. Some of his former feeling of liking for it returned, sharpened by feelings of defiance. Nevertheless, just before he put out the candle once more, he glanced at the picture again and fancied that in the far upper corner of the frame one fat, pale angel that he had not noticed before looked down at him with a face that wore a smug and secretive smile.

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ABOUT a year after the affair of the picture there occurred another small incident of such a similar nature that it would hardly be worth recording were it not that, this time, it was Gabriel himself who, without any hint from Sylvester, felt that Theresa's interference in some things was going a bit too far.

A mission had been held in the church for two weeks, one week being devoted to men and the other to women; and before the greater humiliation took place at all, Gabriel had the humiliation of seeing Sylvester and Larry, and indeed all the other fellows in his class, going off every evening to the men's mission, while he was kept back to attend the second week in company with his mother and his aunts.

To this humiliation he had, however, bowed; but one morning, about a week after the closing of the mission, when he was getting up and dressing for school, his aunt Theresa came into his room. He had just finished brushing his hair, which was usually the last item of his preparations for the day.

Theresa looked at him.

"Are you ready?" she asked.

"Yes, Aunt."

Thinking that she meant he would be late for school, Gabriel gave a hasty glance around him and made for the door.

"Just a minute, Gabriel. Aren't you forgetting something?"

Gabriel, who had almost reached the door, came to a stand. As he did so, he saw his aunt glance at the top of the cabinet in the corner of the room and he knew at once the cause of her vexation.

"Were those medals given out to lie about on top of a

chest of drawers?" she demanded, pointing her finger at a pair of blessed medals that had been distributed during the mission, and which now lay where she pointed, fastened together with the safety pin by which they had been secured to Gabriel's clothes upon the previous few days.

Gabriel said nothing, but went over and took up the pin from which the medals dangled. But Theresa put out her hand and snatched them from him.

"Give me your coat!" she said, jerking it by the collar as she spoke. "I'll sew them into it in such a way they won't be found lying about the house again."

Gabriel took his hands out of the sleeves awkwardly and allowed the coat to be snatched into Theresa's lap as she sat down abruptly on the side of the bed and, producing a threaded needle from under a pleat in her bodice, began to sew the medals into the lining of the coat. Gabriel stood indifferently at her side as the needle flashed in and out of the dark serge, and the medals hit together with a thin, tinny sound. Then suddenly his eyes settled more steadily on his aunt's hands.

"Oh, not there!" he cried agonizedly, as he saw that she was stitching the medals so near the flap of his lapel that they would undoubtedly be seen every time he stirred.

"Why not? Are you ashamed to be seen wearing them?" Theresa stopped sewing for long enough to stare at Gabriel — long enough for him to give a reply if he could — and then she resumed her stitching without breaking her thread.

A few minutes later Gabriel went out to school with the medals distinctly visible under his left lapel.

That was not the end of the incident, however, for during the day Theresa took every opportunity of referring to Gabriel's forgetfulness over the medals; and when dinnertime came and he slipped into his place she saw an excellent opportunity for upbraiding him.

"I see there are some things you don't forget," she said. "I see you don't forget to come to the table."

Gabriel moved about on his chair uneasily. Would she never stop talking about those old medals, he wondered.

Now, as Gabriel squirmed about on his chair, although he did not notice it, his aunt Sara seemed to be uneasy about something also, and she exchanged a significant glance with his mother.

Lily and Sara had always felt that Theresa was too hard on Gabriel, even in the matter of his temporal welfare. On one occasion Sara had even ventured to speak to Theresa.

"Aren't you a little too hard on him, Theresa?" she had asked timidly.

Theresa, however, had had her answer ready.

"Hard on him?" she said. "I have to be hard on him when you and Lily are so soft with him." Her face assumed an elaborate expression of patience. "Don't think I like to be hard. Let me tell you it would be far easier to be all smiles and gentle words. But I have a sense of responsibility if neither of you have one. It would be very nice for me to have Gabriel run to me, and throw his arms around me, and kiss me, but I know that if I encouraged him at the expense of discipline I would be

taking the easy path; I would be avoiding my duties. If I am hard on him it is for his own sake. I want him to realize that as he goes through life he need not expect to find everyone as foolish and easygoing as yourself and his mother. I want him to realize that other people will not give way to him as you do. He will meet with reversals like everybody else, and he may as well get used to them at an early age. Of course I know the sacrifices I'm making. I know the boy will grow to dislike me — if he doesn't dislike me already — but I am ready, as I say, to make sacrifices. Some day he will thank me, and even if he is thankless, as most people in this world turn out to be sooner or later, I will still have the satisfaction of knowing that I acted as I thought right."

All this was said in the quick staccato sentences which people use when any one of these sentences could have stood alone as an expression of their meaning. Then she sighed. "Ah, Sara," she said, "you little know how hard it is to be always stiff and stern. There are times when I would like to relax, but I would not permit myself such a luxury when a boy's character is at stake." At the sad truth of her own words, Theresa sighed again, a deeper sigh than before. "It's easy to be all smiles and soft words," she said.

No more was said for a time about Theresa's attitude toward Gabriel. Before long, however, Sara began to feel uncomfortable once more as Theresa's interest in Gabriel's spiritual welfare doubled her occasions for correction and admonition. And so, on the day of the disturbance over the medals, she felt that something should be said. But this time she was careful to say it to someone other than Theresa.

"Lily," she said, "I'm worried about Gabriel." She paused and put her head to one side, choosing her words with extra care out of respect for the matter upon which she was about to speak. "I'm worried at the way Theresa harps on things — for instance, the medals this morning. I'm afraid that Gabriel might form a wrong impression about his religion. He might begin to think that God is harsh and unreasonable."

"Harsh and unreasonable? God?" Lily did not understand.

"Oh, you know," said Sara with timid impatience, "like Theresa herself."

"I see what you mean," said Lily, and she became very agitated. "But what can we do?"

"Well, I was thinking," said Sara, "that I might say a few words to him, if I get the opportunity. I might try to let him see that there is another aspect of religion; that God is gentle as well as stern, loving as well as just." Sara's face grew soft and happy for a moment, and then

the habitual small frown of worry settled upon her faded face. "What do you think?" she asked.

"I don't know," said Lily. "I suppose I should say something to him myself?" But she looked very scared at the prospect, and had no sooner made the suggestion than she saw a way for evading its execution. "These matters are so delicate I'd hardly know what to say. But you have a knack of putting things nicely. I think you'd better do it."

What Sara considered a suitable opportunity was nothing more or less than a moment when Theresa would be absent, or out of earshot, and so, a few minutes after her talk with Lily, when she saw from the window on the landing that Theresa had gone down to the bottom of the garden with a basketful of wet clothes that would take at least ten minutes to spread upon the clothesline, and when she heard at the same moment a sound in the hallway that indicated the return of Gabriel, that was enough for her. With a quick pressure of Lily's arm which was meant to convey to her sister all that was in her mind, Sara sped lightly down the last steps of the stairs, and into the hall, where in the dim light she appeared suddenly to Gabriel like a wisp of spirit.

"Gabriel," she said. "I wanted to say something to you. Don't worry about the medals. God will understand. He will never blame us for forgetfulness. It is only when we do something bad deliberately that He is hurt. Although of course we must remember that He watches over us night and day. 'Not one leaf shall fall to the ground,' He said, 'without My knowing it.' Isn't that a beautiful saying, Gabriel?" And then, hearing Theresa's voice at the back door, Sara turned and sped away again, leaving Gabriel staring after her, surprised, and hardly aware of what she had said to him.

It was not long, however, before he noticed that his aunt Sara had taken upon herself the task of counteracting the possible effect on him of Theresa's austerity. For as Theresa's vigilance over his soul grew more intense, Sara's whispers of balmy consolation grew more frequent, and more and more it became fixed in his mind that religion was another peculiar twist in the minds of the women in Clewe Street.

Theresa's statement that smiles were easier to bestow than frowns was so indubitably true as applied to themselves that both Sara and Lily did not doubt that it was true when applied by Theresa to herself as well, and for some time after this conversation they tried by muscular contortion to assume the expression which, on their sister's face, came naturally from within like measles pock. But as milk will not wrinkle unless it is sour, their faces were soon bright and blossomy once more.

(To be continued)

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